

# CAR Busters

N°14



April-June 2002



# CAR Busters

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**La traduction française** est fournie dans un supplément inséré dans tous les magazines destinés aux pays francophones. Contactez Car Busters si vous voulez le recevoir dans un pays non-francophone.



**V české verzi** tohoto časopisu nazvané *Krotitelé Aut* naleznete překlad hlavních článků, výběr z nejlepších zpráv, studií a dalších zajímavostí. Tentokrát vás vezmeme na kole na cestu proti běhu času, podíváte se do Fesu v Maroku anebo si počtete o vlivu sociálně politického vývoje na podobu měst.

# The Wisdom of Times Past



English

In **World News** this issue, you'll read that one town in Virginia, USA, has just banned playing in the streets. *Streets are for cars, stupid!* It's yet another reminder, as if we needed one, of how much is getting lost along the way in our eagerness for modernity and development.

Looking back through the hazy ages of civilisation, between the plagues and wars, there was something there in the quality of community life that should be rediscovered and reinstated in the move away from today's car-dominated, hypermobile cities. Something which was written into the very fabric of the city and still brings millions of tourists worldwide to hundreds of medieval cities every year, to feel for themselves how their inhabitants might once have lived. Something in search of which we, your Car Busting hosts, have bent the laws of physics and travelled back in time. And this something is still out there in some ancient cities, like the medina of Fes in Morocco, to which one of our roving investigators introduces you in this issue.

Undeniably, the rewriting of our urban landscape by changing transport modes has had implications which have reached up to the political and social structures of our settlements. So it just might be that the kinds of changes which we might like to see made to our cities might also cause changes to the established order. In this issue, we provide a crash course in social history to get you thinking about the even-bigger picture.

And next issue, in case you might accuse us of getting all dusty and academic at you, we'll take a look at how this wisdom of ages gone by might be reflected in visions for cities of the future. Don't be shy: If you have a vision of what future cities should look like—whether detailed or dream-like, professional or poetic, textual or artistic—you have until May 31 to send it in!



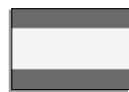
Deutsch

In der aktuellen Ausgabe unsrer World News ist zu lesen, dass neulich eine Stadt in Virginia, USA, das Spielen in den Strassen verboten hat. *Mensch, Strassen sind für autos, Dummkopf!* Eine weitere Erinnerung daran - als ob wir eine gebraucht hätten - wieviel in unserem eifrigen Streben nach Modernität und Entwicklung verloren geht.

Wenn man durch die verworrenen Zeitalter der Zivilisation zurückblickt, gab es zwischen Pestepisoden und Kriegen etwas im Gemeinschaftsleben, das in der Entwicklung weg von den heutzutage üblichen autodominierten, hypermobilen Städten wiederentdeckt und wiedererweckt werden sollte. Etwas, das in die Grundstruktur der Staedte eingeschrieben war, und jährlich weltweit noch immer Millionen von Touristen in hunderte von mittelalterlichen Städten bringt, die selbst spüren wollen, wie deren Einwohner einst gelebt haben mögen – auf der Suche nach etwas, für das wir, die Car Busters, die Gesetze der Physik aufgehoben haben, und in die Vergangenheit gereist sind. Ein solches Etwas existiert noch immer in einigen alten Städten wie der Medina von Fes in Marokko, worüber einer unsrer rasenden Reporter in dieser Ausgabe berichtet.

Unzweifelhaft impliziert die Restrukturierung unsrer städtischen Landschaft durch die Wandlung der Fortbewegungsmittel Veränderungen, die bis in die politischen und sozialen Strukturen unsrer Lebensräume reichen. Genauso könnte es sein, dass die von uns erhoffte Umgestaltung unsrer Städte die etablierte Ordnung verändern würde. In dieser Ausgabe bieten wir einen Crashkurs in sozialer Geschichte, der zum weit ausholenden Nachdenken, zum Nachdenken auf lange Sicht und über Tiefenstrukturen anregen soll.

Und in der nächsten Ausgabe, für den Fall des Vorwurfs trockenstaubiger Intellektualität, werfen wir einen Blick auf Möglichkeiten, wie sich diese Weisheit vergangener Zeiten in Visionen für die Städte der Zukunft niederschlagen könnte. Keine falsche Schüchternheit: Falls du eine Vision für die Stadt der Zukunft hast – ausgearbeitet oder traumhaft - träumerisch, professionell oder poetisch, textlich oder künstlerisch – bis zum 31. Mai hast du Zeit, all dieses einzuschicken!



Español

En las Noticias del Mundo de este número vereis que en una población de Virginia, EE.UU, acaban de prohibir jugar en la calle. ¡Las calles son para los coches, estúpidos! Es otro recordatorio, por si necesitáramos alguno más, de cuanto nos estamos dejando en el camino hacia la modernidad y el desarrollo.

Echando la mirada hacia atrás, através de las etapas de la civilización, en medio de las plagas y las guerras, encontramos algo en las formas de vida social que deberíamos redescubrir y reimplantar en nuestra huida de las actuales ciudades dominadas por la hipermovilidad y los coches. Algo que estaba inscrito en la propia naturaleza de las ciudades y que todavía atrae a millones de turistas del mundo entero todos los años a cientos de ciudades medievales, para sentir por sí mismos cómo habrían vivido sus habitantes. Algo en busca de lo cual hemos burlado las leyes de la física viajando hacia atrás en el tiempo. Y este algo sigue estando ahí en algunas ciudades antiguas, como la medina de Fes en Marruecos, que uno de nuestros intrépidos investigadores te presenta en este número.

Sin duda, la remodelación del paisaje urbano provocada por los cambios en los modos de transporte ha tenido profundas implicaciones que alcanzan a las propias estructuras sociales y políticas de nuestras sociedades. Por lo tanto, sería posible que el tipo de cambios que nos gustaría ver en nuestras ciudades provocaran también cambios en el orden establecido. En este número, proporcionamos un curso acelerado de historia social para que reflexioneis sobre el cuadro con una mayor perspectiva.

Y en el próximo número, para que no nos acuseis de polvorientos academicistas, nos plantearemos cómo esta sabiduría de los tiempos pasados se puede reflejar en las visiones de las ciudades del futuro. No os corteis: si teneis ideas sobre cómo deberían ser las ciudades del futuro-bien en forma concreta y detallada o en forma de sueño, en plan profesional o poético, textual o artístico. ¡Teneis hasta el 31 de Mayo para enviarnoslas!

## CAR Busters

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# Letters

Lettres • Briefe • Cartas



*Feeling alone with your opinion? Send a letter under 300 words, and we just might inflict it on all our readers.*



Special SUV Lane by Gordon Chessmar. Larger, coloured version of the picture is available for download on <http://www.carbusters.org/>

## The Winner of the Cogitation Competition

[Ed. note: In our last issue, we had a competition concerning the figures on the cover of the mag. Jasper knew exactly the right answers and will be rewarded with the promised surprise: The CARtoons book by Andy Singer, Roadkill Bill by Ken Avidor, Alice in Underland by Wolfgang Zuckermann and a nice bottle of Becherovka. Congratulations, Jasper!]

Yes, I know, I'm too late [Ed.: No you are not,] maybe I was reflecting too hard, but now I'm awake again, I have some answers to your cover-competition. Einstein is testing his  $E=mc^2$  on a biking Critical Mass, Socrates, the very first Car Buster, is sitting on a car, Nietzsche is scratching the ring of Wagner to scare off the traffic, Sartre is doing some guerilla gardening, Newton tries to smash a mac with an apple, Gandhi tries to oversee the riot police moves, the Asian guy, Tse Lung Fong something [Ed.: Confucius really, but ok], is doing the banner drop, and Freud is just hanging there.

Jasper,  
The Netherlands

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## To Bike or to Have a Boyfriend?

I was late in passing my driving test at the tender age of 22, compared to most of my friends. Before being sucked into the world of cars, I was an avid cyclist. I owned my first bike at the age of four and I depended on a clapped out French road bike (that I swapped for ten pounds and a block of tofu) as my transport throughout my university years.

Nothing gave me greater pleasure than to feel the wind in my hair and on my face, as I sailed down Cottingham Road on the way to university from my flat, kicking the side of any posh student Cabriolet I happened to pass.

I'd never been keen on the thought of driving, but a 22nd birthday present of "driving lessons" changed that. Shortly after, I became the owner of a Nissan Micra.

The affair was to be short lived though. Over time, I recalled how much I used to enjoy my bike. Everytime I reached for my car keys, my bike would cry "Take me!" Something had to give.

A trip (yes, in my car) to a local anarchist bookshop gave me my first exposure to *Car Busters* magazine. I bought a copy and took it home.

"Car Busters, for a world without cars. What's this?" my ex cried.

I knew him and the car had to go. I found the nearest and heaviest offensive weapon (it was a wooden lump hammer) and smashed the hell out of my car. Nothing was spared. Two weeks later I also left my boyfriend for good and I have been carless ever since. I should have done it when he bought me that car in the first place. So, Car Busters, thank you for making me sane again!

Nikki  
Prague/UK

## How Do You Say Car-Free?

As the carfree concept takes root, we are developing and adapting words and expressions to describe it. In English, for example, we say "car free" and "car-free," but the single word "carfree" has increasing currency.

What terms are emerging in other languages? I'd like to prepare a list of as many relevant ones as possible. Can you help?

I'm not looking for literal translations, of course, but for the words and phrases coming into widespread use in various places around the world. The terms we want are ones that carry a connotation of freedom from autodependence, not a sense of lack or absence.

Please, send me any terms and expressions you are aware of, even if you

think they are so well known that they "must be on the list" already. Once I've compiled the list, I'll post it for everyone's interest and enjoyment.

Doug Salzmann  
<doug@carfreeinstitute.org>

## From Birth to Death in a Car

Last fall we took a pre-natal course offered by the City of Ottawa. One of the evenings was devoted to selecting the right car seat. We watched a video telling us all about car seats.

After the video, I asked the instructor if she had any safety tips for taking a baby on the bus or in a taxi. I didn't expect the reaction I got: the lady looked at me as if I was insane. In a patronising way, she told me that if I was willing to assume the risks of taking our baby on the bus, that was my business. Also, if we were to take a taxi and hold the baby—well that would be gross negligence on our part!

Sigh. Your cartoons of birth to death in a car are all too true.

Anyway, I'm happy to report that at eight days of age, our daughter took her first trip on a bus and seemed to enjoy it very much. I can't wait to teach her how to ride a bicycle.

Adrian Evans  
Ottawa, Canada

## No More Bikes

Did you know that in 1970, more than a third of the kids in America rode their bikes to school? Whereas that number is all the way down to two percent nowadays.

The main reason for this is because the ubiquitous automobile has re-engineered the very way all of us do our lives. As it continues to insulate us from the planet and one another, our kids have a completely different experience of growing up from that which most of us enjoyed.

No longer does life exist for them on their way to or from places, all they know is the temperature controlled environment of a car. From here they no longer interact with the world around them as they cannot hear it and the bird song that makes it merry or smell the seasons as they change or interact with the people along the way. Sad.

Martin Krieg  
Santa Cruz, California, USA

## Slogan of the spring

Bicycling counteracts our addiction to cars, which makes corporations rich and citizens fat, lazy and poor.

Elder Bill Denneen  
Nipomo, California, USA

**"We've got to pause and ask ourselves:  
How much clean air do we need?"**  
- Lee Iacocca, former president of Chrysler Corporation



# CAR CULT REVIEW

## The Ecstasy of Murder

A woman from Texas, USA, is accused of hitting a homeless man with her car, driving home with him lodged in her broken windshield and ignoring his pleas as he bled to death in her garage.

A witness told police that the suspect, Mallard, admitted drinking and taking the drug Ecstasy on the night in October 2001 when her car hit the man. Mallard drove home, had sex with her boyfriend, then went back to the garage to find victim—Biggs still alive. She waited two days for the man to die and then dumped his body in a park with the help of friends.

Police reported finding Biggs' blood and hair on Mallard's car, still in her garage more than four months after the crash. The windshield and front seats had been removed. Mallard told investigators she removed the car seats and burned them because she was afraid of being caught and going to jail. She planned to burn the car and buy another one after receiving her income tax refund.

Mallard was charged with murder and faces five years to life in prison if convicted. But her attorney claims "she was simply a frightened, emotionally distraught young woman who had an accident, panicked and made a wrong choice."

- Associated Press, March 8

## Gas-Guzzling Patriotism

Andrew Serkanic has been a U.S. patriot since he was seven. His car is a white Ford Explorer which "gets 12.8 miles per gallon [100 km per 18.5 litres] that I love to pay for," Serkanic said, beaming.

For him and many others in Wayne, New Jersey, there is no contradiction between patriotism and driving a gas-guzzler. They don't believe that individual Americans can make the United States less dependent on Middle Eastern countries and others by buying more fuel-efficient vehicles. And they give little credence to the notion that the United States has earned the enmity of many Arabs and Muslims because it refrains from criticising the corruption and human rights violations in oil-producing countries. Serkanic says to that: "In my simple mind, this has nothing to do with oil."

Indeed, there is less these days to

remind Americans about the relationship between their gasoline use and global politics than at times in the past. The retail price of gasoline has been falling and car dealers all around the country have been selling record numbers of sport utility vehicles and other light trucks.

Another patriot, Sue Smith, had already heard the theories, and she dismissed them entirely. "I don't think it's unpatriotic to use so much gas," she said, loading her silver Chevy Tahoe with groceries. "It's very patriotic. It's our way of life."

And what of the consideration that the American way of life means that a country with less than five percent of the world's population uses 25 percent of the world's crude oil? "Why should we cut back?" she asked. "We are an affluent society. Should I hate my neighbour because she has a better house, a better car, more money?"

"We should go on living the way we're living," said Ms. Smith. And she added: "What would get people to stop driving SUVs? If God came down from heaven and said, 'You can't drive SUVs anymore.'"

- adapted from *The New York Times*, November 23, 2001

We have discovered this brilliant web site—<http://cartalk.cars.com>—full of car cult inspiration and delight. The following is a digest of our favourites. But check it out, there's much more.

Official Car Talk  
Driving Violation

### Citation: Moronic Activity while Driving

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Make: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Model: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_ License: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking on Cell Phone   | <input type="checkbox"/> Eating Chicken Soup                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using Laptop Computer   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ogling                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Model Airplane | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Newspaper                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driving Naked           | <input type="checkbox"/> Applying Nail Polish or Makeup (male)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing Crossword Puzzle  | <input type="checkbox"/> Applying Nail Polish or Makeup (female) |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Picking Nose (No penalty—we do it too.) |

### Fine categories:

- ☐ Glancing Dope Slap
- ☐ Full Frontal Dope Slap
- ☐ Dope Slap with Kick in the Tushus
- ☐ Nuclear Dope Slap



Made possible by your pals at [cartalk.cars.com](http://cartalk.cars.com)

## Drivers in Direct Action?

Undoubtedly inspired by *Adbusters'* fake parking tickets, Car Talk stars decided to produce their own, saying: "Let's face it. America's esteemed law enforcement community is way behind the times. It's 2001 and they're still giving out tickets for quaint violations like speeding, failing to stop, and pulling a U-turn on the interstate. It's time to take matters into our own hands with our Official Car Talk Violation Notices." These include Moronic

Activity while Driving, Boneheaded Driving Maneuver, Lousy Parking Offense, Blue-Hair Offense, Talking On Your Cell Phone, Guilty of SUV Ownership.

## Mechanical Misogyny

What happens if you let two people of the opposite sex do the same thing—get their car repaired? Students from an experimental psychology class from a college in Florida went to find out. A girl named Tammy disconnected the ground wire for the "check engine light" on her Kia so that the light stayed on. She took the car to ten different repair shops, and then had her macho boyfriend Corey take the car a week or two later to the same shops.

The results? Corey was given the right diagnosis in eight out of ten cases and was only asked twice to pay for the repair work, with \$135 being the highest sum required. On the other hand, Tammy was given all sorts of reasons why her car was unhappy, but only in one case it was the actual one, and the shop didn't ask for any money to put the wire back in place.

In all the other nine shops she was asked to pay from \$283 up to \$2,400 for the "necessary" repair work. Actually in one shop the mechanic offered to cut her a deal if she would go out with him. When she said she was married, the mechanic said "So? You're still good looking."

## Discover Your CARma

"Is there conflict between your personality and that of your car? Have no fear! Car-O-Scope is here to help you determine if you're driving a car that fits your psychographic profile, i.e. do you have the right "carma"? Or are you struggling hopelessly with a vehicle that just isn't right for you? As you well know, this conflict can have devastating consequences and must be avoided at all cost."

All you need to do to get your Car-O-Scope is answer some questions on the Car Talk web page and wait for the results.

But if you're married, make sure your partner doesn't find them or you'll end up like this guy writing to authors of his Car-O-Scope:

"You're almost breaking up my marriage after 26 blissful years. I didn't know I wasn't supposed to be driving a Toyota Corolla, I didn't know my "carma" was off, that I was a cheap-skate, a wuss and a snob...and neither did my wife. I recently took your Car-O-

Scope test and my wife got into my e-mail, and now we both know.

"You see, the real dilemma is that my Car-O-Scope suggested I dump the Corolla and get a Dodge Colt Vista. My wife took the test and it told her to dump the Corolla for an Infiniti I30! We only have one Corolla, and one of us will have to be in bad carma. The question is, can an Infiniti-type person find happiness in a Dodge Colt Vista? Or do I also have to dump my wife?"

- Cheapskate in California





# INDUSTRY WATCH

Digging the dirt on your favourite corporations

## *The Attack of the Tie-Dyed Chameleons!*

### **How many colours can bad companies paint themselves in and still come out shit brown?**

In January, the former head of Greenpeace, Peter "GM crop-trashing" Melchett, sold his soul to the corporate devil and became a consultant for Burson-Marsteller (B-M), the biggest public relations company in the world. We decided to take a closer look at B-M, and the co-opting of environmentalism by PR firms and big business.

B-M specialises in "greenwashing" environmentally and socially destructive firms which come out of the spin-dryer "greener-than-green." The company worked for Exxon after the Exxon-Valdez oil tanker spill in Alaska (the worst oil spill ever), and for the 1980s Argentinean military dictatorship that "disappeared" 35,000 civilians. Following B-M's work for Union Carbide after the 1984 gas leak that killed up to 15,000 people in Bhopal, the Indian Supreme Court dropped all charges. In 1995, they were hired by Occidental Petroleum, Dow Chemicals and Shell, to avoid new legislation that would force them to clean local Californian water supplies of the pollutant DBCP.

And in 1996, B-M worked for the Indonesian government, which has one of the worst human rights records in the world.

B-M has also worked for Monsanto, BP, Nestlé, Unilever, Sainsbury's, British Nuclear Fuels, the UNITA rebels in Angola, Ford, Occidental Petroleum, Coca-Cola, Chevron, the Saudi government after September 11. It even worked for the brutal Burmese military junta, the SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council), which B-M advised to change its name to the State Peace and Development Council. The people they kill and torture are much happier now.

### **Burson-Marsteller's Methods**

"When you need help on environmental issues," reads the B-M literature, "you need environmental professionals. [We] offer a worldwide environmental team. Issue experts. Lobbyists. Community relations counsellors. Technical advisors and media specialists."

**Media:** B-M has many contacts in the world's media (almost entirely owned by five global companies), allowing anyone with enough money to buy

easy access to public opinion. Around half of all stories on news programmes originate from PR firms, and as the PR firms are also the advertising agencies, it means the same companies that produce billions of dollars of advertising also provide news stories for the media.

In many cases the firms are in direct partnership with TV companies. In the UK, B-M is in partnership with ITN (Independent Television News) in the Corporate Television Networks (CTN). They use ITN staff and facilities to make promotional videos for business clients, and these videos have ended up in ITN broadcasts. For example, CTN made a film for Shell, blaming Nigeria's Ogoni people for the oil spills devastating their land. Parts of this were shown on television in News at Ten broadcasts.

**"It is easier and less costly to change the way people think about reality than it is to change reality."**

- PR adviser Morris Wolfe

**Lobbying Governments:** B-M is one of the main avenues for putting commercial interests directly inside governments. Recently, a group of businessmen hired B-M to help abolish Daylight Saving Time in Britain and within weeks B-M became the administrative secretariat of the "independent" All-Party Group in the UK Parliament.

**Hiring Third Parties:** B-M has been accused of paying academics to write articles supporting its campaigns (though without declaring their interests of course). This ranges from funding for scientists who contest the climate change theory, to taking over university research departments. Their "partnership" with Leeds Metropolitan University includes providing input into the university's courses, lecturers and offering training programmes. This summer Harold Burson will be receiving an honorary degree from the university, at a time when most students have gone home. For more info, see <[www.resist.org.uk/reports/background/lmu.html](http://www.resist.org.uk/reports/background/lmu.html)>.

**CyberCops:** B-M is an "authorised reseller" for <[www.ewatch.com](http://www.ewatch.com)>, which offers companies the "cybersleuth" system,

identifying "entities whose motives are fraudulent, deceptive or criminal" behind web "attacks." Advice is given on how to deal with the activists, including arranging arrest of the "perpetrators." And, since the demonstrations in Seattle in 1999, a subsidiary of B-M produced an in-depth guide of all the green/left groups involved, to pass on to their clients. It provides details of the organisations, their ethos, and details of their organisational structure and leaders.

### **Co-opting the Green Movement**

When respected environmentalists such as Melchett work with businesses like B-M, Shell, BP, etc., it gives credibility to the myth-making symbols of the PR firms. Some environmental charity will get some small donation from the company, which does little for their cause, but the company will have a greatly improved image, gaining respect through their "green" association.

A classic case is The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The environmental charity accepted \$1 million from Chevron and BP (together these companies make over \$20,000 million profit per year) for a conservation project in Papua New Guinea. In return, "WWF will act as a buffer for the joint venture against...international environmental criticism," says a leaked Chevron document. In 2000 WWF held back publication of a report on tropical forest destruction, for fear of upsetting the companies it named.

B-M also specialises in forming green-sounding industry front groups such as the Global Climate Coalition (formed in 1989 from most of the big car and fossil fuel companies). Their mission? To discredit the near consensus reached in the scientific community on the threat of climate change.

Another group B-M helped set up in the early 1990s is the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), whose members include, among others, Chevron, Volkswagen, Mitsubishi, and Shell. Since its inception the "Council" has been successful in watering down environmental treaties such as the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the series of Kyoto "hot-air" climate conferences (e.g., Bonn 2001 or The Hague 2000). In the forthcoming Rio+10 in Johannesburg, they will argue strongly for industry self (i.e., no) regulation.

### **We All Wear Suits Now**

"We don't understand, he's given us no reasonable explanation," said one Green-

peace member. "Why would he compromise his integrity like this? It's not as if he needs the money... If Melchett had joined a supermarket to advise them on organic purchasing, we could just about understand him snuggling up with corporations, but Burson-Marsteller, come on... why would anyone want to associate with them?"

However, Melchett has shown corporate tendencies before. Last summer, in a speech at the "Getting Engaged" event organised by the corporate "Environment Council," he stated that environmentalism had moved on since the early campaigning days in the 1970s and 1980s, and now had to look at solutions focused more on business than politics because of "a shift in power from politics to business." This seems to miss the obvious point that business is patently part of the problem, *not* the solution (to reverse a B-M created slogan).

The Environment Council has organised several "stakeholder dialogues" between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the big corporations. In September 2001, a meeting entitled "Environmental Reputation in Business Strategy," featured Shell, BP, British Nuclear Fuels, B-M, and Nestlé discussing issues of "reputation management" with Greenpeace and other groups. Several grassroots groups declined invitation, including Reclaim the Streets and Corporate Watch (Car Busters wasn't asked!) stating that the event "just seemed to be helping companies' PR departments."

"Managing Activism," published by the UK Institute of Public Relations, describes this process, in typical PR Orwellian double-speak, as "two-way symmetrical communications" which "offer a way forward where the company does not have to give in to activists or persuade them to give in."

The tactic of the PR firms is to isolate the "radicals" from the support of the "realists" (the ones who work with them). Labels like "extremists" and "terrorists" are given to anyone who refuses to compromise or takes effective action. (See *Car Busters* no. 13, "Are Environmentalists and Pacifists Terrorists?")

Many in the NGOs, especially among the grassroots, are getting a little wary of this "engagement." Simon McCrae of Friends of the Earth admitted that engaging with business was a "contentious issue" at his organisation. "The conference seemed to consist of NGOs telling corporations how they work," said one person who refused the invitation. "It was an exercise in NGOs telling business how to get around NGOs. It was just assisting their PR departments in helping them to know the enemy." Other NGOs seem less ambivalent. "Working with business is as important to us as munching bamboo is for a panda," said a representative from WWF.

Even Greenpeace now sees dialogue as an "essential" part of its work, although their new Executive Director in the UK, Stephen Tindale, admits that some people will always see engagement as a "sell-out." "Well, we all wear suits now," as one delegate to the conference said.

There is a real danger, however, that environmental groups such as Greenpeace could lose their identity. The public tend to trust environmentalists more than government or business because of their integrity; people tend to feel that enviros have less vested interest in the issues. If environmental groups sell their integrity to the devil of big business, they will have lost their main basis of public support. As Melchett himself observed, "NGOs will only ever run a successful campaign when they are backed by public opinion, and also more importantly, public values."

## The Great Environmentalist/PR Revolving Door

Other famous environmentalists have also switched sides. Jonathan Porritt was one of the most prominent British environmentalists of the 1980s as spokesperson for the Green Party. Then he went to work for the government and "engage" with business, and has disappeared into obscurity and no longer poses a threat. The same could happen to Melchett. When Greenpeace/Melchett destroyed a GM test-site, almost everybody realised that GM crops must be bad. Powerful acts like this have far more effect on public opinion than talking now and then to Shell will ever do.

Here are a few more cases of PR-itis: Des Wilson, after decades of working for NGOs such as Friends of the Earth, moved to B-M and then to the British Airports Authority to fight for the expansion of Heathrow Airport! Jonathan Wootliff, an advisor for The Environment Council's magazine, is also Managing Director of Edelman Public Relations' Global Stakeholder Relations where he "provides support to corporations in building productive relationships with NGOs, pressure groups and activists so as to minimise vulnerability." Previously he worked for Greenpeace and Hill & Knowlton, a huge transnational PR firm. Paul Gilding, a former director of Greenpeace, has set up a corporate consultancy in Australia called ECOS.

Greenpeace doesn't even seem too worried with Melchett's decision, as the group says it has "been giving advice to business for years. Peter will be giving the same advice in a different capacity." But don't give up on them just yet; Melchett has now been forced to resign from the Greenpeace International board, following severe criticism.

## Johannesburg = PR+10?

### Blue\*wash (n)

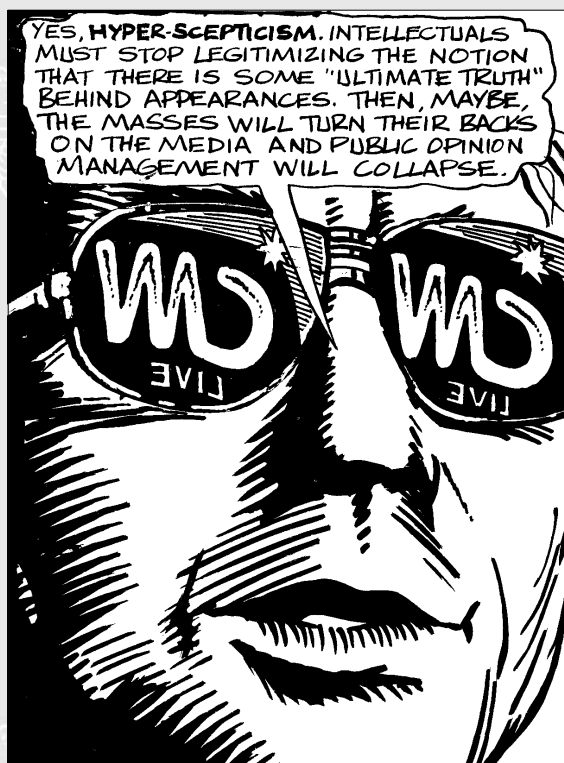
1. Allowing the largest and richest corporations to wrap themselves in the U.N.'s blue flag without requiring them to do anything new. (*New York Times*)

Now, with the Rio+10 Sustainability Summit in Johannesburg, B-M has done its latest bit of PR-ing. It has set up a new industry front group, combined from both the International Chamber of Commerce and the WBCSD (see above), forming in true mutant sci-fi fashion, the Business Action for Sustainable Development [sorry for all the acronyms, they are carefully designed by the public opinion managers to create confusion and bewilderment among the public, see *Car Busters* no. 11]. This group advocates "self-regulation" and publicises anecdotal cases of industry's "contribution to sustainability." Its slogan is "business is part of the solution" and for its leader they have chosen former Shell chief Mark Moody-Stuart, a travesty to any idea of environmental and human rights.

Shell now posts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on its web site, suggesting that human rights are "the heart of our business" (as the Nigerian Ogoni protesters killed by Shell's hired guns well know). If this isn't a sick joke, what is? This is the world of bluewash. But no amount of tie-dye, chameleon-like colour changes can hide the kind of squidgy-brown colour that lies beneath. ■

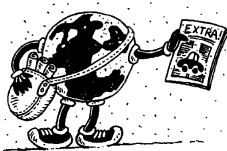
- Joe Dodds

Info obtained from: SchNEWS 337, 2002; Andy Rowell's "Green Backlash," and his "Corporations 'Get En-gaged' to the Environmental Movement" on <[www.prwatch.org/prwissues/2001Q3/engaged.html](http://www.prwatch.org/prwissues/2001Q3/engaged.html)>; "Global Spin" by Sharon Beder; Greenpepper, Winter 2001; "What's Wrong with Burson-Marsteller?" and "Brief History of Greenwash" on <[www.corporatewatch.org](http://www.corporatewatch.org)>.



# World News

Nouvelles du monde • Nachrichten aus aller Welt • Noticias del mundo



Welcome to your global news network, all the way from Prague. From the bizarre and bad to the brilliant and mad.

## Ecuador

### Military Attacks Pipeline Protestors

Protests against Ecuador's new OCP pipeline (see *Car Busters* No. 13) turned fatal on February 27 as thousands of striking OCP construction workers and local residents in the northern Ecuadorian Amazon were attacked by the country's armed forces. Two children and two adults were killed by the military, close to 40 people were arrested and over 300 wounded.

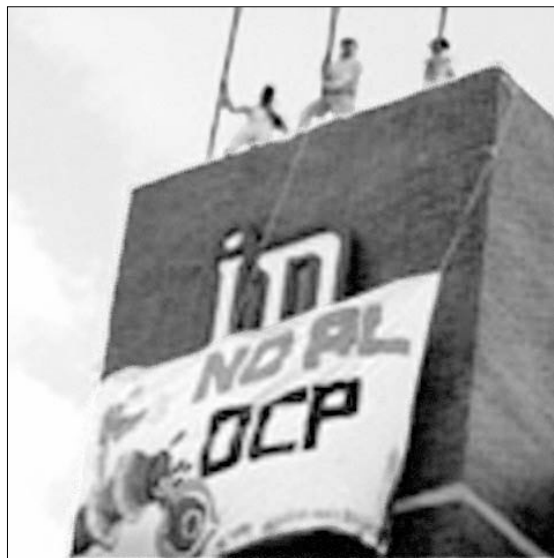
The two Amazonian provinces, Sucumbios and Orellana, have been paralysed since February 18 when a general strike was called by workers, residents, and local government leaders. The strikers demand fair and just compensation for the serious impacts of the pipeline and pumping station and much needed funds for roads, hospitals, a reliable electricity service and clean running water.

Organisers say that 90 percent of the population is behind the strike. Demonstrators erected roadblocks and have been occupying over 60 oil wells and five refineries—halting all construction on the pipeline and bringing oil production in the region to a near standstill.

President Gustavo Noboa, who has long warned that he will “bring war” to anyone in the way of the pipeline and fight them “trench by trench,” declared a state of emergency for both provinces, suspending basic civil rights and giving maximum power to the military to break up the demonstrations. Under the decree, the state has prohibited public meetings, restricted the movement of key civic leaders, ordered the detention of various journalists and permanently shut down local radio station Radio Jungla for broadcasting messages that were deemed “against the state of emergency.”

The state of emergency was lifted by March 4, but both provinces continue to be militarised. Local media blackout continues as radio stations remain either off the air or under a military gag rule.

Once pristine rainforest, Sucumbios and Orellana are now the largest oil producing provinces in the country, and despite the alleged benefits of the industry, remain the country's most



impoverished. For over 30 years, state and foreign oil companies like Texaco and Occidental Petroleum have pumped the region for billions of barrels of oil, while indigenous communities, local farmers, and townspeople have watched it descend into environmental, social, and economic ruin.

The strikes are the latest in a series of ongoing protests which have paralysed construction along sections of the pipeline route and threaten the OCP Consortium's \$900 million syndicated loan from a German bank WestLB. Largely state-owned WestLB has received a lot of criticism in Germany for planning to fund a project that doesn't meet the environmental standards of the World Bank.

- *Amazonwatch.org, March*

## Colombia

### The First All-Colombia Car-Free Day a Success

Over 14 million Colombians in nine cities could get where they were going without their automobiles on Thursday, February 7, as Colombia held its first national Car-Free Day. The capital city of seven million held its first ground-breaking Car-Free Day three years ago on Thursday February 24, 2000, pulling all its private vehicles off the street and opening public spaces to greater access for public and alternative modes of transport.

Although the first Bogotá Car-Free Day was met with widespread resistance, the day was so successful that the people of the city supported a referendum, with an 87 per cent majority, to make the Car-Free Day an annual event. This mandate has helped the city gain support for new public transport projects and initiatives for expanding infrastructure for alternative transport.

This year, in addition to Bogotá, the other cities holding car-free days are Cali, Palmira, Manizales, Neiva, Ibagué, Pasto, Valledupar and Villavicencio.

The Car-Free Day is a part of an improvement campaign that began in Bogotá in the mid-1990s. It has seen the construction of 118 miles of bicycle paths—the most of any Latin American city. Parks and sports centers have also bloomed throughout the city; uneven, pitted sidewalks have been replaced by broad, smooth ones, and rush-hour restrictions have dramatically cut traffic.

- *Associated Press, February 7*

### \$98 Million to Protect a Pipeline

The Bush administration is planning to provide \$98 million to the Colombian military to help that country's armed forces protect an oil pipeline of the state oil company Ecopetrol that was attacked by guerrillas 166 times last year. The pipeline was out of service for 266 days because of the attacks.

Until now, US funds designated for the Colombian military have been earmarked for efforts to curb the flow of narcotics. However, after September 11, the common enemy has been “terrorism,” which might also change the US policy in Colombia.

- *Miami Herald, February 5*

## United Kingdom

### Chumbawamba's Tune Sold to GM

The anarchist band Chumbawamba has sold their song “Pass it along” to General Motors, the world's biggest carmaker, for \$70,000. The money was given to IndyMedia and CorpWatch for campaigning against GM itself, whereas GM is planning to use “Pass it along” for their “Pass it on” ad campaign for Pontiac cars.

Chumbawamba has a history of using advertising revenue to fund activist causes. They accepted a Renault commercial in Italy only after Italian pirate radio stations said they would use the money. The band also gave Ford's money for a South African ad to local anti-capitalists.

CorpWatch and IndyMedia were naturally initially wary about taking money from a corporation diametrically opposed to their aims, but eventually decided in favour of what such large sums could do to aid their campaigning work. The opportunity to drum up some publicity, quite literally at GM's expense, must have been attractive too. As guitarist Boff explained on the band's web-site: “We'd discovered through all the years of having no money just how powerful it can be if it's in the right hands.”

- *London Observer, January/  
Salon.com, January*

### Petrol Cars Banned?

Tony Blair's chief scientific adviser has called for a complete ban on the sale of petrol- and diesel-powered cars, in one of



the most dramatic proposals yet made on tackling climate change.

Professor David King proposes that Britain should follow the example of Lombardy, a heavily industrialised region in northern Italy, which is to ban the sale of fossil fuel powered cars from January 1, 2005.

Professor King's remarks are the first time any Government adviser has advocated such a tough policy on car use.

- *The Independent, February 17*

### London Congestion Tax

Beginning next year, motorists entering central London between 7 am and 6:30 pm will have to pay up five pounds per day. About 40,000 vehicles per hour enter central London, a figure officials hope will drop by 15 percent thanks to the "congestion tax."

Singapore, Melbourne, and Oslo all have similar congestion taxes in place.

- *Gristmagazine.com, February 28*

### Air Traffic Controlled?

Last August rumours surfaced that UK transport secretary Stephen Byers wanted to "streamline" planning procedures for projects of "national significance," basically by reducing "unnecessary delays" such as lengthy public enquiries.

By early December the official paper appeared, and one month later the "freedom to fly"-lobby, consisting of everyone with an interest in the expansion of the aviation business, called for heavy investment in airport capacity. Just one week on from the lobby's call and three new runways at Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted were already being considered by Whitehall ministers. There is even talk of an all new airport right in the Thames estuary.

And this all happens just after September 11, while the aviation business is supposed to be having huge difficulties.

- *The Ecologist, March*

### United States

#### Bush Administration Sued

Three environmental organisations filed suit in the US federal court on January 2, 2002 to force 18 federal agencies to abide by a law passed in 1992 and supported enthusiastically by the first President Bush. The law—the Energy Policy Act, passed in the wake of the Gulf War—requires federal agencies to buy vehicles that run on alternative fuels as a way to reduce the country's dependence on petroleum.

The agencies with vehicle fleets in the larger cities should be buying alternative-fuel vehicles at the rate of 75 percent by now. They've failed abysmally. The act required the Department of Energy to develop and oversee a plan to replace ten percent of US gas consumption with alter-

native fuels by the year 2000 and 30 percent by 2010. It is no secret that the year 2000 goal was not met.

This failure is largely attributable to the federal government's failure to comply with the Energy Policy Act's requirements; most federal agencies have not come close to meeting the minimums set up by the act.

- *Environmental News Agency, January*

### TEA-3 to be Diluted?

In 2002, the US Congress, the road lobby and public interest groups are gearing up to pass the third Transportation Efficiency Act. "TEA-3" is a huge package of federal transportation funding and the regulations guiding how the money is spent.

Unfortunately, the chairman of the House Committee in charge of formulating the legislation is already holding hearings with the aim of gutting the environmental review and air pollution provisions that made ISTEA, the predecessor of TEA-3 a new breed of transportation funding. Under the guise of "streamlining," Don Young, a 15-term, right-wing Republican from Alaska seeks to destroy the product of years of bipartisan negotiation by the representatives of a country in love with the car.

- *T.A. Bulletin, March*

### Playing in the Streets Banned

The Fairfax City Council in Virginia has ruled that, without exception, no playing shall be allowed in public streets.

"We want to send a message that it is not okay to play in the street," said City Manager Robert L. Sisson.

And so it goes. In communities across the country, street games that just a generation ago were a fixture of childhood are fading under rising fear about traffic.

Even the once popular children at play signs, which used to warn of games on or near the street, are forbidden in Montgomery and Prince George's counties and elsewhere across the country. "Our experience is that the signs provide a false sense of security—that it is okay to play on the street," said Hadi Quaiyum, traffic studies chief in Prince George's County. "The street should be strictly for cars," he added.

- *Washington Post, February 18*

### 45 Years for Chicago Road Rager

A 31 year old Chicago man has been sentenced to 45 years in prison for killing 26 year old bicycle messenger Thomas McBride in 1999.

Late last year, Carnell Fitzpatrick was found guilty of first degree murder after a jury deliberated for 16 hours over the case. He was considered for reckless homicide, a lighter charge than first degree

murder, however the court eventually rejected the former after the killing was deemed to be deliberate.

The subsequent trial was the first in which a motorist had been accused of killing a cyclist in a case of road rage. Eyewitness reports established the deliberate nature of the killing, forcing the jury to vote in favor of first degree murder instead of reckless homicide.

The judge handing down the sentence said that Fitzpatrick's act was "as intentional as it gets." He was asked by Assistant State Attorney Lynda Peters to impose a heavy sentence on Fitzpatrick in order to deter others from committing similar acts of road rage.

- *Cyclingnews.com, February*

### Tolls for Bikers and Walkers?

The GGB District in San Francisco has advocated possible tolls for bikers and walkers for crossing The Golden Gate Bridge. The issue will be further discussed in upcoming GGB community meetings.

- *Julie Leitzell, March*

### Pacific

#### Kyoto Won't Help Sinking Pacific Isles, US Says

According to Washington's chief negotiator on climate change the Kyoto protocol on climate change abandoned by the United States would not save tiny Pacific islands from sinking beneath the waves.

While low-lying Pacific nations like Tuvalu worry that they will soon disappear, chief US climate negotiator Harlan Watson said it was likely regional volcanic instability was playing just as big a part as greenhouse gases.

Desperate Pacific states are seeking ways to fight back against rich polluting nations and multinational concerns whose emissions of green-house gases they say are wiping them out. Tuvalu, a string of nine coral atolls five metres (16 feet) above sea level at their highest point, fears its last palm tree could sink beneath the Pacific within 50 years.

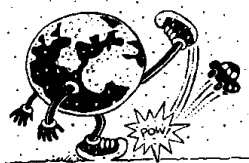
Tuvalu Prime Minister Kolua Talake has foreshadowed a David and Goliath legal battle, saying his South Pacific nation of 10,000 people might sue the United States and Australia over their failure to ratify the 1997 Kyoto Treaty. While not expecting to win what would be lengthy and expensive legal cases, observers say that Tuvalu would at least draw global attention to its plight.

Other threatened Pacific islands include Kiribati, Niue and the Marshall Islands and the Maldives in the Indian Ocean.

- *Reuters, March 5*

# Action!

Action • Aktion • Acción



*You wouldn't believe some of the things people get up to. If your action report doesn't appear here, then make sure it will next time. Contact details inside front cover.*



## Carnage at Carnival

**Cadiz, Spain:** February 11 marked the first action of the Tactical Strategic Deployment Cell of the San Bartolome Kropotkin Action Group, during the huge annual Carnival. Abandoning doom-mongering, they opted to hurl themselves at cars instead. This report is from Comrade Borracha Maricon:

"We donned costumes to fit into the festive Carnival atmosphere. There were thousands of joyous revellers in Cadiz, some watching music, others on different squares enjoying drummers and dancing. The atmosphere was incredible, that is, except for the occasional car driving through the happy people who were forced to dash out of the way of mad metal machines zipping through the crowds. When there was a sufficiently large number of people nearby, we in an instant put our plan into attack mode. We waited until a car could be seen coming through the crowd, and then entered the street, shouting slogans such as "Necesitamos un Mundo sin coches!" (We need a world without cars!), about how cars were dangerous, causing skin cancer, asthma, death to people like Ken Saro-Wiwa in Nigeria [see *Car Busters* No. 2 & 7], and explaining the unnecessary thousands of human deaths by road accidents.

"Then, as the cars slowly approached through the dense throngs of the crowd, we would hurtle our bodies upon the bonnets of the cars, pretending to be victims of road accidents. At first, the crowd was stunned and didn't know what to think, as with the drivers. However, after each "accident," we would get up and explain in quite some detail the ideological and practical reasons for our theatrical project. Soon, the crowd was chanting us on with each approaching car.

"Our group action facilitator Grifo took turns coordinating the attacks, lining up our cell members and instructing the next in line with each approaching

car. Early warnings began to come down the street from the crowd, loving the spectacle of it all. As they began chanting and staring at the unsuspecting drivers, we would run up, throw ourselves on the bonnets and tops of cars, and scream in agonising pain and madness with each passing deathmobile. The crowd loved it all, and cheered us on for more.

"One car actually stopped and two men got out to show us that they had very big chests and loud voices, but the crowd was behind us, and when we explained that it was only for public entertainment and education, they got in their car dumbfounded and sped away. Our action continued until a ridiculously early time in the morning, as demanded by the crowd of lunatics at Carnival.

"After a lengthy debriefing and post-action analysis, it is the decision of the San Bartolome Kropotkin Action Group that this is a very effective (and fun) tactic to encourage drivers to curtail their addiction to automobile usage. Just imagine if you were the driver of a car and three people at once ended up plowing straight into your windshield, up and over your car, screaming bloody murder through the process with a thousand eye witnesses. Would you want to drive again soon?

"Good luck with any similar action planning in your town. Most importantly, after extensive training and experience with this tactic, we should suggest that you don proper attire including helmets and full body armour, such as the Red Man suits used by American police for riot training. Also, please do not hold ourselves or *Car Busters* Magazine responsible for twisted ankles and badly bruised knees, the worst ailments affecting our Cell."

- **Comrade Maricon, Puerto de Santa Maria, Spain**

## New UK Road Protest Camp

**Alvaston, UK:** The UK government is happily building roads again, having forgotten ever saying anything about reducing traffic, and some election that it might have helped them win. A protest camp has set up in Devon, on the site of the proposed Alvaston Bypass. The bypass is to pass right alongside a primary school and will endanger the habitat of the protected Great Crested Newts, as well as doing all the things we're so used to roads doing: increasing regional air pollution (in a designated Air Quality Management Area), congestion, noise pollution, and make all alternative journey modes longer, and all for 20 seconds off a journey into the city.

The campers on the site are calling urgently for more people to join them.

Contact Clem at the site office on +(44) 01332 663031, or see the following website for more details: <[www.alvaston-bypass.i8.com](http://www.alvaston-bypass.i8.com)>.

## Paradise Dug Up

**Tenerife, Canary Isles:** One of Europe's most popular holiday destinations, the island of Tenerife, has been subjected to rapid development since the advent of cheap mass tourism. It has a denser road network than any other Spanish region, and protests have long been occurring over recently proposed Via Diagonal (a new highway which will close the gap in the island's circular route) and an expansion of the Granadilla de Abona commercial and industrial port. The final nail in the coffin of the once-beautiful island is the arrival of oil prospectors to the isles of Lanzarote and Fuerteventura.

There have been demonstrations and more than 15,000 letters of citizen's objections sent to the council, and the council's decision on the road project still hangs in the balance. The action campaign is calling for help and international support.

- **Tagoror Ecologista Alternativo (TEA)**

For more info check out TEA's website at <[www.nodo50.org/tea](http://www.nodo50.org/tea)>, or post to TEA, Apdo. de Correos 11.036, DP 38080 Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

## Carbon Traders Get Gassed

**Amsterdam, Netherlands, and London, UK:** Activists from the Rising Tide network disrupted two conferences on Carbon Trading in March. The conference in London's Kensington Palace Hotel was disrupted by a group called "Pie in the Sky," which made its own presentation to the £300 per head delegates from

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KPMG, Shell, the UN and the EU, explaining the importance of climate justice and an effective cut in CO<sub>2</sub> levels.

The conference in Amsterdam was halted for a few hours by protesters with “fart gas,” wearing blue wigs, toting water-pistols and blowing horns. BP’s Head of Climate Change was in mid-speech as the protesters stormed the stage and locked on, throwing carbon credits into the audience. Outside a group of 60 people played samba and performed street theatre, and later moved on to perform a solidarity noise demonstration outside the police station to which 13 activists had been taken.

Rising Tide is a coalition of groups taking action on the causes of climate change, and is vehemently opposed to the proposed system of carbon allocation trading—whereby the right to pollute the atmosphere may be sold as a commodity. It is believed that carbon trading could

generate US\$489 million on the worldwide markets, and will provide a profitable way in which the rich developed nations can shamelessly continue to disproportionately pollute the atmosphere.

#### - Rising Tide

Contact: Rising Tide, Postbus 94115, 1090 GC, Amsterdam, the Netherlands or see <[www.risingtide.nl](http://www.risingtide.nl)>.

### French Government Throws Caution to Wind

**Chamonix, France:** The Mont Blanc tunnel between France and Italy, closed to trucks since the March 1999 fire in which 39 people died, has re-opened to traffic. Even before the accident, there was massive public opposition to the tunnel, and especially to its use for freight. Local governments, including the mayor of Chamonix, also opposed the reopening. Six thousand trucks a day would use the tunnel. A petition against the re-opening of the tunnel to heavy traffic received 120,000 signatures from both French and Italian ends, and so when the tunnel was re-opened to cars on March 9, between 2000 and 3000 people turned up to protest, despite the short notice. Two hundred police reinforcements were brought in to control the crowds, who marched from the town of Chamonix to the tunnel entrance, carrying posters and ringing cowbells.

The threat of a massive demonstration and blockade at the re-opening of the tunnel to freight briefly appeared to have pressurised the government into compro-



Mont Blanc tunnel demonstration, Oct 2001

missing on its decision to open the tunnel to freight traffic. The decision, incidentally, was announced days after the collision of two lorries in the Gotthard road tunnel killed ten people.

It seemed that the French government would ban the use of the tunnel to trucks over 19 tonnes, effectively preventing all international freight. This compromise was accepted by environmentalists but rejected by many Italian haulage firms, who threatened action in EU courts. Now, the French government have gone back on the compromise, which had forestalled mass action at the opening of the tunnel to light freight, and announced the re-opening to all freight on June 25. A further mass action is likely for this date.

#### - Initiative Transports Europe

For more details contact Initiative Transports Europe, c/o Alpen initiative, Kapuzinerweg 6, CH-6460 Altdorf, Switzerland or check out the web site <[www.initiative-des-alpes.ch](http://www.initiative-des-alpes.ch)>.



Pie in the Sky educate the conference in London

## Critical Mass Roundup...

**London, UK:** The monthly Critical Mass in February christened the infamous wobbly bridge at Blackfriars. The new pedestrian bridge was built to link the new Tate Modern gallery and St. Paul’s Cathedral, opened for the millenium and closed again straight afterward, as the sideways motion of pedestrians was making it unstable—but it would have been fine for bikes!

**York, UK:** The city’s second Critical Mass, on February 2, was organised with Rising Tide and aimed to remind drivers of their contribution to global warming. Statues in the city were supplied with inflatable arm-bands to keep them above the rising sea. On the same day, the river flooded to a height of 15ft (4.5m), making the message that bit clearer. See <[www.geocities.com/yorkrt](http://www.geocities.com/yorkrt)> for more info and good pictures.



**Salt Lake City, Utah, USA:** While the celebrated Critical Mass bike ride is not yet a recognised Olympic event, massers took to the crowded downtown streets of Salt Lake City in the final

weekend of the Olympics (Feb 22) with form and fashion rivaling the closing ceremonies. Thousands of people from all over the world were entertained, bemused and informed by the energetic but peaceful procession of bikes. The ride was stewarded by bicycle-mounted patrol officers, which only served to reinforce the message of the event.

#### Prague, Czech Republic:

The March Critical Mass co-opted the traditional Czech spring solstice festival, in which a figure representing winter is burnt and thrown in a stream to welcome the spring. The riders chanted the traditional phrase “Vynášíme Smrt”—we throw out the death—as the burning car effigy was thrown into the Vltava River to welcome in the post-automobile age and hopefully more much needed facilities for cyclists in car-plagued Prague.



(Picture courtesy of MAFa, Martin Svacek: thanks!)



RANDY GHENT & RICHARD LANE

## Pedalling Backwards Against the Flow of Time

It all gets too much for transport campaigners sometimes, and fed up with the ever-present cars spoiling our city and running our lives, the Car Busters team decided to go in search of a truly car-free city. But where, we wondered, would we find such a thing? The answer came in a flash: in the past! There were no cars there. A pedal-powered time machine was pieced together on one of those long winter afternoons (plans forthcoming on the web site) and we all clambered aboard. With the article on city form and transport modes from *Car Busters* no. 6 as a guide, we pointed ourselves at the past and burnt a path through time and space.

### LOS ANGELES, USA: March 16, 2002

Just to remind ourselves how bad things have become, we begin our travels in Los Angeles, USA, in the present. Aside from its exceptional size, it might as well be Atlanta, Phoenix, or almost any large American city. People here live in a world built for and around the automobile. This type of city has radically undermined people's natural ability to move about by their own power. Replacing density with speed, people's daily destinations have spread to the wind, tauntingly placed out of reach of their feet, almost forcing people's dependence on high-speed, high-energy transportation technologies.

This is pretty much the only world they know. It seems that in an environment built for and around the car, most people who can drive will drive, and others will be chauffeured around by those who can. People assume that street space should be devoted almost exclusively to transporting people elsewhere. Community life is largely absent. Sixty percent of the city's surface area is paved

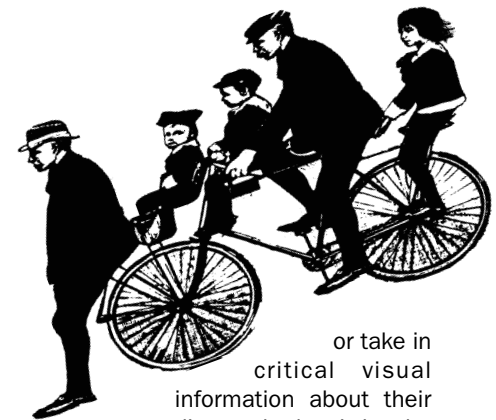


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over. People are packaged in metal boxes as passengers, consumers of distances whose shape and length they can no longer control. They struggle to find free time for themselves. Many of them are overweight; others somehow discipline themselves to drive to the gym. The people accept this situation as normal.

Because their world is a function of the car, the machine has become by far the most practical, reliable and convenient means of locomotion. No wonder that they cling to it so mightily. Ignorant that other urban forms are possible, the people seem to feel that the car's convenience and practicality are inherent qualities of the car, rather than the direct consequence of a landscape built for and around the car. People here say "you'll never get people to give up their cars." They address the car's negative side effects by supporting modifications to car design more wholeheartedly than a gradual transformation of the urban form to make alternatives more viable. Perhaps the latter wouldn't even occur to them—rarely does the fish question the water itself. All manner of technical solutions are proposed to help people reach their far-flung destinations faster, more efficiently, or with less pollution. Little if anything is done to bring people's destinations back within reach of their feet, to replace transportation with autonomous movement, to stitch together an urban fabric that has been ripped apart by speed.

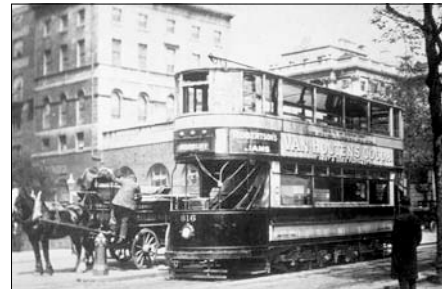
Still, as soon as these people park their cars and enter the gates of Disneyland, or even a shopping mall, something peculiar happens. Not only do they enter on foot, they find that the environment has been built in such a way to make walking the most efficient and most pleasurable means of locomotion. Here, in the heart of suburbia, everyone walks and cars are banned! Yet no one complains that their right to drive has been infringed upon, perhaps because the environment is human-scaled, rich in destinations and activity. The shops or attractions have been built close together to make it effortless, sometimes even enjoyable, to walk between them. In fact, at a speed above walking pace, they would find it difficult to interact with other people



or take in critical visual information about their surroundings, whether it be the texture, colour and price of clothing for sale, the intricate detail of traditional architecture, or the whimsical crookedness of Goofy's smile.

### LONDON, ENGLAND: August 17, 1896

Our crew has just had the most unfortunate experience of witnessing the world's first known automobile fatality: Bridget Driscoll, 44, of South London was killed walking past a car show at Crystal Palace on her way to a Catholic event, by a car going four miles per hour (or so the driver said: this was the speed limit at this time). The car hit her as she walked into the road, its driver goes unpunished—in these days there are no licenses to revoke. From now on the word "accident" will be used by coroners to describe the rising death toll on the road. People here are talking about what a shame it was,



and how such a thing should never happen again. If only they knew...

Still, here in 1896, London is not yet a city for cars. The automobile was just invented ten years ago, and even now Henry Ford is perfecting the design in his workshop in Detroit. It has a long way to go before it is rendered practical by highway regulations and road surfaces. The first tramway was built in 1891 but it only caused endless complaint as the rail protruded from the road surface and tripped up the horses, and it has now been removed. Horses are still the dominant mode of transport, 50,000 of them employed in pulling the omnibuses,



carriages and carts across the city, producing around a thousand tonnes of dung every day. The Metropolitan underground railway opened in 1863 after much scepticism in the media, running on steam at first, and beginning to convert to electricity from 1890. The railway boom of 1840 to 1860 was opened up to the workforce with the Cheap Trains Act, passed in 1883, and this has meant rapid expansion of the suburbs. The workforce can now afford to commute into the city every morning and avoid the overcrowded slums of the inner city which were the cause of the three cholera epidemics of the century. London is a Public Transport City for now.

Not everyone is happy with the idea, and during our brief visit we observe a number of flustered gentleman burst indignantly from a carriage amid raised voices. Many well-to-do authors of the day lamented having to share their carriages with the great unwashed, and the omnibuses were not designed to the greatest standards of comfort. *The Times* newspaper in 1836 printed a list of Omnibus Laws to remind the populace among other things not to spit on the straw, to behave respectfully to females and not “put an unprotected lass to the blush,” and to broach politics or religion only with moderation.

It is a time of great change in a proud city. The Victorians have an insatiable appetite for novelty and grand ideas about progress. By 1905 all the underground lines will be running on electricity and both electric trams and horseless carriages commonplace in the city. But the motor car is already turning heads among the rich. By the end of this year, a rally celebrating the raising of the speed limit to 14 miles per hour will have caused the first automobile injury to a child. The horses will be forced off the road by the demands of the wealthy motorists, and

trams and finally trolleybuses succumb to the automobile.

The streets are hectic, and not altogether fragrant. Carefully picking our way between the horse dung, crossing sweepers and carriages, we head onwards, upwards and backwards.

### ■■■■ SIENA, ITALY: April 3, 1348

We touch down in Siena just as Ambrogio Lorenzetti is putting the finishing touches to his famous painting of the city—later causing consternation among local artists until our offending silhouette is erased from further reproductions of his picture.

Siena is at the peak of its glory, a city of 60,000 people nestled in the red clay hills of Chianti, undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities in the world, as it remains in the present-day. Siena has become one of the major cities of Europe, a city of merchants, bankers, traders, and artisans, maintaining Italy's largest banks and dominating the trade routes between France and Rome. Siena's rival Florence has been defeated and the Black Death doesn't arrive for another month yet, so we are safe.

The city has developed a highly sophisticated civic life, with its own written constitution, a quasi-democratic government and a council responsible for as wide a range of duties as any modern city. It's also one of Europe's principal centres of Gothic art.

The marketplace, a great public square called the Piazza del Campo, is the focus of city life. The square lies at the convergence of the city's three quarters, each broken down further into about twenty parishes. Each *contrada*, as they are called, has its own identity (expressed in part through a heraldic animal motif), as well as its own church, fountain, public square and militia.

Every citizen is a pedestrian. Donkeys carrying loads are led through the streets,

barrows are pushed, navigating around children playing. In the central arteries, it's bustling even at this time of evening.

The streets are not strictly for moving around; they serve as the stage for community life. Cultural and social life is rich, diverse, and spectacular. Great festivals take place in the Piazza del Campo, in front of the majestic Palazzo Pubblico, completed to high praise and exacting architectural standards in 1308. Painters like Guido da Siena, Mini and our friend Lorenzetti are producing works that will be remembered for centuries.

How is this accomplished—a city of 60,000 people without public transport or anything faster than walking? Do people accomplish less because they can't move around faster? The entire city is contained in an area less than four square kilometres, which sounds small but is actually around the size of Paris at this time. Destinations are close together and people spend less time in transit than they would in a modern city. Everything is within walking distance. But more profoundly, even within this extremely compact city the need for walking is minimised; many of one's daily destinations can be found in the immediate neighbourhood. Buildings average four to five stories tall. The defensive city walls form the abrupt boundary from urban to rural. Outside the walls is the farmland that feeds the city.

But this idyllic city life will be lost forever with the arrival of the Black Death. Three-fifths of the city's population will be killed by the plague, hitting the densest areas hardest. The heart of the city will be shattered, and the next two centuries will be a steady decline into political instability and subjection for this city, which now seems so alive and the people so inspired. If it wasn't for our knowledge of this imminent catastrophe, we might just stay a while. ■



As we whorled forward through the centuries, we managed to get this shot of Siena from the air. None of the others came out, funnily.





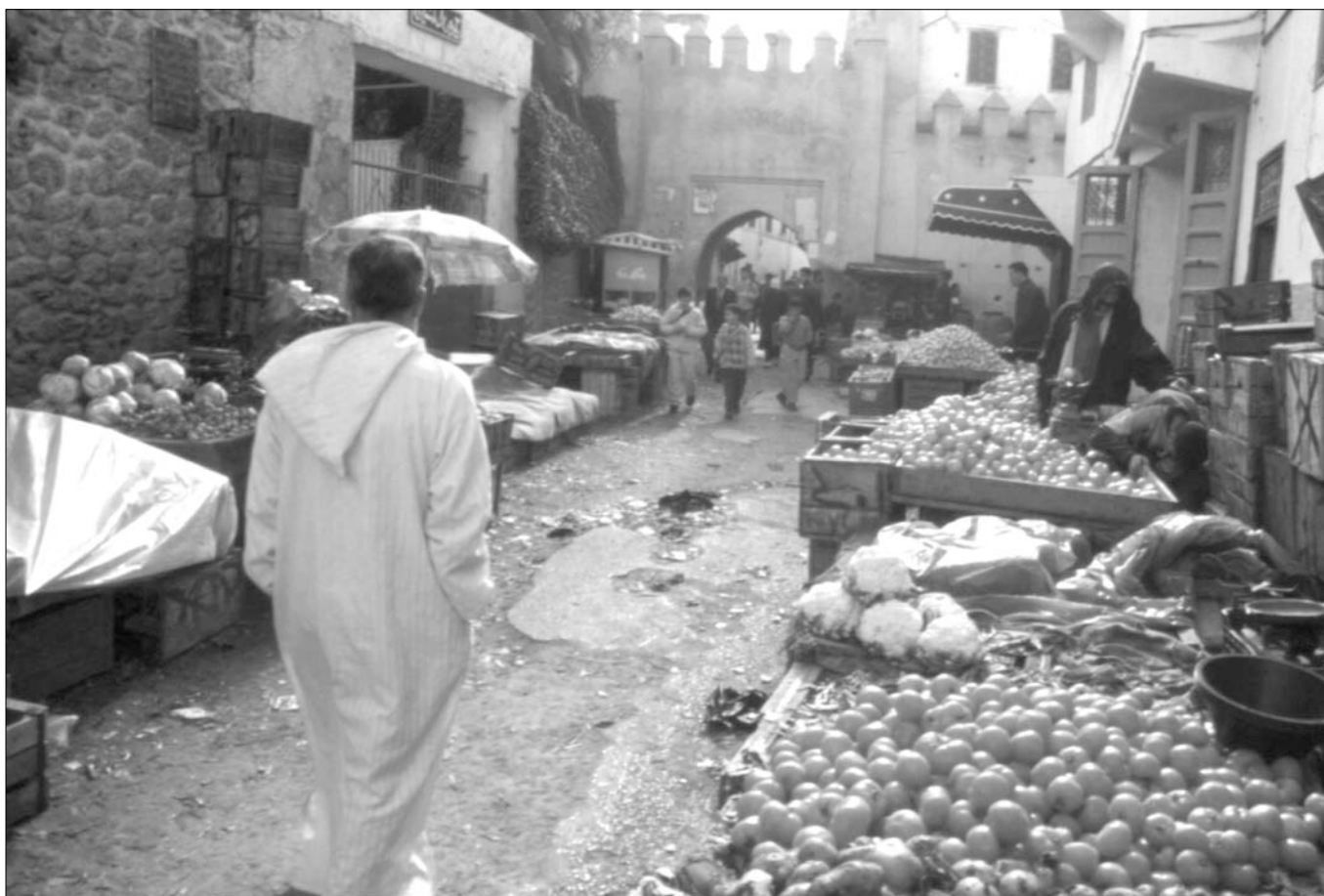


photo: Randy Ghent

*Exploring Medieval Urbanism in Fes, Morocco*

# At the Speed of Two Feet

**RANDY GHENT**

*"The most ancient of the [Moroccan] imperial capitals, and the most complete medieval city in the Arab world, Fes is—for the moment at least—unique. It is a place that stimulates your senses, with haunting and beautiful sounds, infinite visual details and unfiltered odours, and it seems to exist suspended somewhere between the Middle Ages and the modern world."*

- **The Rough Guide**

**M**any tourists in Morocco find their way to Fes, spending a few days getting lost in the maze of its *medina* and leaving with an unforgettable experience like going back in time. They wander through marketplaces, *souks* and *fondouks*, peer into mosques and *medersas*, get coaxed into carpet and silver shops, sip sweet mint tea over couscous or *tajine*, marvel at the workings of medieval tanneries, and absorb themselves in the spectacle of vibrant and exotic street life.

For all the fascination of Fes to the outside visitor, its jarring contrast to life in Europe or America can be a powerful impediment to drawing lessons for our own societies. Yet

as the world's largest contiguous car-free urban area, and one of the world's largest remaining medieval cities, Fes offers us a rare opportunity to immerse ourselves in the history of urban form, experiencing the past first-hand in the present.

Car Busters organised a week-long, five-person study tour to Fes in December 2001, after an initial visit two years earlier. We found in Fes an incredible living example of how a dense, compact urban habitat can be built without dependence on motorised or mechanised transport, while providing the necessary preconditions for a rich and vibrant public life.

None of this should suggest a wholesale glorification of medieval life. But at the same time it's increasingly clear that some lifeways of the past, lost somewhere in the "advance" of technology, were arguably preferable to those that replaced them. The eclipse of the pedestrian city, for all its wide-ranging social and environmental ramifications, has been one of the most devastating of these losses. Fortunately places like Fes still exist, giving us the opportunity to see what we have lost, and hinting at the fundamental changes which must take place to rid us of our dysfunction.

There will always be people fond of saying "we can't go back in time," claiming

all things new represent "progress" and must be accepted and embraced as such. There will always be other people who will learn from the past, recognise mistakes in the present, and work toward their individual or collective visions of the future—containing elements of past and present, of creativity and sensibility. This article is intended for the latter group.

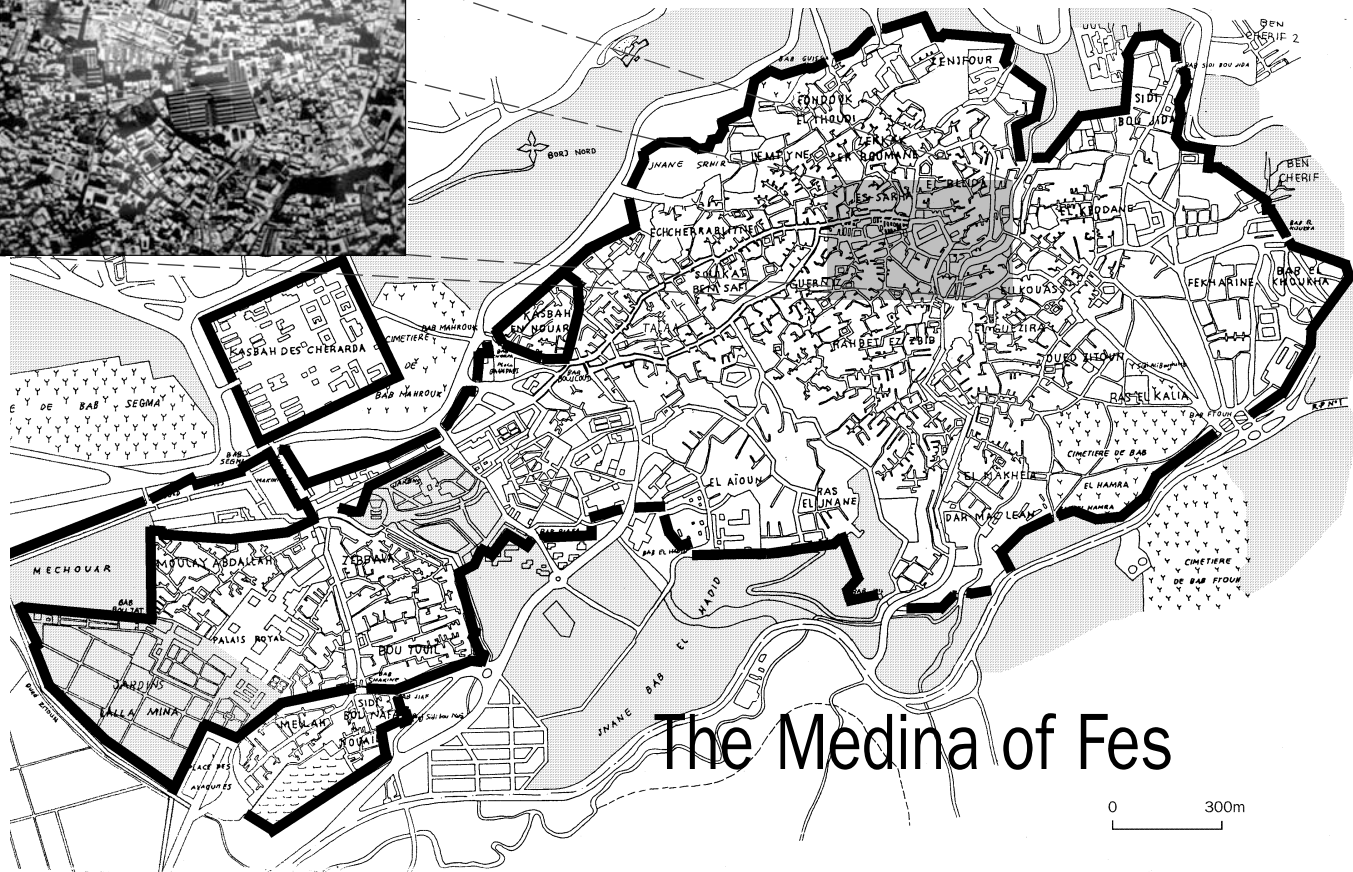
## History

In 789 AD, Moulay Idriss I established a modest settlement on the east side of the River Fes. But it was his son, Idriss II, who developed Fes into a city at the beginning of the ninth century. He made it his capital and allowed in Arab refugees from Cordoba (Spain) and Khairouan (modern Tunisia)—the two most important cities in Western Islam at the time. The refugees established separate walled towns on opposite sides of the river, becoming the Khairouan and Andalous quarters that retain their own characters today. The new arrivals provided the skilled craftsmanship and trading experience for Fes' economic growth.

Eventually, under the Almohad dynasty, Fes became the centre of an empire stretching from Spain to Senegal. From the 10<sup>th</sup> century until the 20<sup>th</sup>-century arrival of the French, Fes dominated Moroccan trade, culture and religious life,

**14**

Car Busters April-June 2002



## The Medina of Fes

and usually its politics. In medieval times Fes was known in Europe and the Islamic world alike as the most advanced seat of learning in mathematics, philosophy and medicine. The 10<sup>th</sup>-century Pope Sylvester II studied at Fes' Khairouine University, and from here he is said to have introduced Arabic mathematics to Europe.

Fes reached a golden age from the 13<sup>th</sup> to mid-16<sup>th</sup> centuries under the Merenids, who gave Fes el Bali (Old Fes) its present shape and form. Next came the short-lived Wattasids and Saadiens, followed by successive sultans vying for control over the north. In the 1800s, central power crumbled and European influence increased. Both Marrakech and Fes effectively served as capitals of a fragmented country.

The French took over after a 1912 treaty, signed in Fes, introduced the French and Spanish protectorates over Morocco. In 1916 came the construction of Fes' Ville Nouvelle (New City) in French colonial style. The French also moved the Moroccan capital to Rabat, 200 kilometres away on the coast, ensuring Fes' demise as well as its preservation.

UNESCO declared the medina of Fes a World Heritage Site in 1981, but this status has not been adequate protection against various car-based

intrusions, whether planned and discarded or actualised.

In January 1995, a group of experts attending an international meeting on "Heritage and Town Planning" in Fes to consider the future of the city, was informed, almost incidentally, of a vast project to drive three major highways through the historic heart of the medina.

"Once again it was under cover of the magic words 'progress' and 'modernisation' that massive demolition programmes were to be undertaken and cars brought into the very heart of the city," wrote Mounir Bouchenaki of UNESCO's World Heritage Division three years later. "The name of Hausmann [see page 21] was, of course, invoked...together with several vague references to the leitmotifs of the Modern Movement, in order to justify the huge

demolition and clearance programmes whose sole consequence would have been to destroy one of mankind's outstanding achievements."

The visiting experts, however, pointed out that the life of a medina was totally dependent on a complex and delicate balance between the ordered arrangement of urban space, the means of circulation, the streets within the city, and the ways of life and forms of social interaction there. Their recommendation to abandon the highway scheme received the support of the local authorities, the Moroccan Ministry of Cultural Affairs and UNESCO.

Nonetheless in 1992 a road (the Boukhareb artery) was built into the heart of the medina on top of the River Fes, ending with a massive taxi and bus turnaround at Place Rcif. And in 1996 another road (the Ain Aziliten-Talaa Kebira access) was punched in right up to the medina's main pedestrian corridor, creating a vast wasteland now devoted largely to parking.

The current focus has been on rehabilitation of the medina, and car "access" rather than through-traffic, with the goal of maintaining a car park within a 14-minute walk of every point in the medina. The eight existing car accesses and peripheral parking areas will *not* be removed or scaled back, only "redesigned" and "beautified" with money from the World Bank. Still, the



international bodies' overall effect seems to be a much-needed means of funding the necessary building restoration, and a check on the local agencies' more destructive impulses.

## Urban Geography

Fes can be neatly divided into Fes el Bali, Fes el Jdid, and the Ville Nouvelle. The first two form the *medina* (traditional walled pedestrian city), while the latter lies at a distance to the southwest. The 14<sup>th</sup>-century Fes el Jdid consists of 80 acres of palace grounds and the former Jewish quarter—once an administrative and military city alongside the merchant and trading city of Fes el Bali.

Fes el Bali (Old Fes) still functions as a medieval city today, 1,200 years after its founding, with a population of 156,000 and a surface area of 354 hectares (875 acres). Population densities range from less than 200 people/hectare (80 people/acre) to more than 3,000 people/hectare (1,200 people/acre), with an overall average of 440 people/hectare (178 people/acre). This compares to 242 people/hectare today in Manhattan, New York City. Building heights, aside from the occasional minarets, range from one to four stories. Fes el Bali has just 17 percent of the urban area's population, but is responsible for 60 percent of its social, cultural, and economic activity.

Fes el Bali lies in the bowl of the Sebou Valley at the northeastern edge of the plain of Says, once occupying a strategic position on the caravan route connecting the Atlantic plains to the eastern provinces and the Mediterranean ports to the Saharan cities. The city itself is composed of an incredibly intricate—some would say impenetrable—web of lanes, blind alleys and *souks* whose level of detail and irregularity defy cartography. This is a large part of the place's charm, of course.

There are said to be 9,400 streets in Fes el Bali, but this can be dismissed as mythology spread to encourage tourists to enlist the help of a guide. (With 13,385 buildings in Fes el Bali, that would be 0.7 streets per building!) In any case, all maps of the area are inevitably heavily simplified.

Streets can be divided into three types: *primaires* (arteries) at 3 to 5 metres wide; *secondaires* (collectors), at 1 to 2 metres wide, connect the arteries together; and *impasses* (local streets; cul de sacs; dead ends), at 0.5 to 1.5 metres wide, used to access houses. In some cases you find two or more levels of *impasses* between a house and the nearest *secondaire*.

The terminology employed to describe pedestrian traffic in Fes differs little from that used in American traffic engineering schools. The problem lies not in this hierarchisation of streets, but in the density and scale. New Urbanists may vilify the cul de sac after viewing it in an American automobile-oriented



photo: Randy Chent

context, but here in Fes the *impasse* helps provide peace and calm as well as a gradual transition from public to private space.

## Social Life

Streets in Fes have a dual purpose: human interaction foremost and movement secondary. Human interaction, don't forget is the reason cities exist in the first place.

Each of the approximately 140 traditional neighbourhoods in Fes el Bali (averaging 2.5 hectares in size) maintained a high level of independence. Each had nine public facilities, many of which are still in use today: a water fountain, a bakery/oven, a water mill, a mosque, a school, a bath house (*hammam*), toilets and stables. One can picture the compact size of the neighbourhood by imagining how far you'd care to walk to the nearest toilet.

Focus group discussions and interviews conducted in 1999 by the University of Southern California School of Planning, Policy and Development indicated that Fes el Bali residents shared a strong, geographically rooted sense of community and sense of place that stems from the high level of integration between the social, cultural, economic and physical aspects of life in the medina.

As is characteristic of traditional societies, the majority of residents' daily activities and social networks lie within the confines of the medina. Tight relations between neighbours have developed over years, forming part of a cohesive, comprehensive social and economic network. Much of social life revolves around public spaces, especially the mosque, the *hammam* and the marketplace.

These complex social relationships involve children as well as adults. The ability of children to play in and explore their environment without formal supervision can be seen as vital to their freedom, social development, and social integration—not just in Fes but everywhere. Our study tour witnessed a passer-by scolding a child for begging. If parental

roles such as discipline can be spread among the general population, the parents' constant presence is unnecessary.

## Autonomous Movement

Humans have an innate ability to move about on foot as autonomous beings, without motorised or mechanical assistance. From pre-historic times to the mid-1800s, the urban form of virtually every city, town and village in the world embraced this natural human capacity for movement.

The city was compact, dense, rich in destinations and events, lively, multifarious, closely knit, intimate, human-scaled. All this made walking pace the ideal speed at which to experience it, as there was so much to see and do within a small area. Characteristic were narrow cobblestoned streets one to eight metres wide twisting and turning, bordered by buildings one to seven stories tall.

Streets were used just as much for community interaction as for transit: Activity spilled out from shops and workplaces. Friends, neighbours and acquaintances would meet spontaneously and stop to chat. Without the danger of cars, children were free to play in the streets without formal supervision.

Fes el Bali's urban form is based on autonomous movement, and thus it hasn't been possible for a transportation industry, whether based on public transport or the private automobile, to develop.

Because the configuration of their environment has not been dictated by a transportation industry, people in Fes el Bali have not been reduced to consumers of transportation—or, in Ivan Illich's words "harassed, overburdened consumer[s] of distances whose shape and length [they] can no longer control." They have not become packages transported from place to place. Nor has their environment been cluttered up with roads and vehicles. They are active, autonomous participants in their environment, which they maintain as a warm, congenial place for human interaction.

As Peter Newman and Jeff Kenworthy

write in *Sustainability and Cities*, “In Walking Cities, destinations can be reached on foot in half an hour on average, and thus rarely are these cities more than five kilometres across (an average trip being 2.5 km).”

In the reality of everyday life in Fes el Bali, however, the average trip would be much shorter; because of the relatively high population densities and the intermingling of shops and businesses with residences, most of one’s daily needs could be met within a very short walk of one’s doorstep. Shops, marketplace, workplace, school, place of worship—all are concentrated close to home, thanks to an urban form shaped by the pedestrian. People in Fes el Bali have no need for faster transportation—access by proximity eliminates the need for speed.

I can offer the example of the Croix-Rousse, a 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup>-century neighbourhood in Lyon, France, where I lived for two years: Roughly a dozen groceries and a dozen bakeries could be reached on foot in five minutes from my front door, not to mention the seemingly countless restaurants, shops and businesses of all kinds. I sometimes went for days without leaving the immediate neighbourhood—and without really noticing. Most of the people I knew lived there. Despite living in a metropolitan area of over a million people, my average destination could be reached in a five-minute walk, and I would normally encounter people I knew along the way. In Fes the density of destinations is even more pronounced, as the population density is more than double that of the Croix-Rousse (Lyon District 1: 178 people/hectare).

The high density makes even human-powered vehicles unnecessary and impractical. The bowl of the Sebou Valley, as well as the narrow, cobblestoned streets, make Fes el Bali inhospitable to cycling. But it doesn’t matter. A bicycle wouldn’t save much time anyway. In such an environment, the laws of fluid dynamics would often limit its speed to that of the pedestrian—to which the bicycle, struggling to surpass this optimal speed, would be a menace at best.

From the perspective of an engineer or traffic planner, all this sounds absurd. Understandably so, since Fes el Bali is the very sort of place that has no need or respect for their work. The engineer accepts as normal a system in which huge investments of money, representing wasted energy, are required just to move people and goods around. Countless hoards of well-trained people are required to fill technocratic agencies set up to operate, regulate and police the inefficient system—never mind study and attempt to solve its problems, many of which are inherent.

Yet at walking pace, traffic is self-regulating, self-managing, self-policing. Virtually the only energy consumed is in the form of food. No need for speed limits, driving violations, overpasses or underpasses, asphalt mixers, tubs of white paint, right of way regulations, emergency telephones, toll plazas, garish signage or stop lights. The term “autonomous movement” comes to mean not just human-powered movement, but freedom from technocratic governance (not to mention freedom to interact with one’s environment).

Motorised transport exists between Fes el Bali and other parts of the city, but in most cases it’s impractical for getting from one location in Fes el Bali to another. It would require



April-June 2002 Car Busters

# TRANSLATION

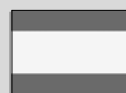
## Übersetzung · Traducción



### Deutsch

**Fes el Bali**, die älteste der imperialen marokkanischen Hauptstaedte und eine der grössten autofreien Städte der Welt, ist ein hervorragendes lebendiges Beispiel für ein dichtes urbanes Umfeld ohne Abhängigkeit von mechanisiertem oder motorisiertem Transport.

Durch eine städtische Form, die die naturgegebene Fortbewegungsfähigkeit des Menschen einplant, ersetzt die Erreichbarkeit durch Nähe den Bedarf an Geschwindigkeit, während die engen Strassen – normalerweise zwischen einem und fünf Metern breit – die Möglichkeit von Geschwindigkeit verhindert. Dennoch sind die täglichen Ziele, die man in dieser Stadt mit 156000 Einwohnern zu erreichen hat, innerhalb gangbarer Entfernungen; um das Zuhause herum konzentriert, und in weniger Zeit erreichbar, als die durchschnittlichen Wege, die von Autos in der modernen Autostadt zurückgelegt werden, brauchen. So begreift man, dass die angeblichen Vorteile von Geschwindigkeit eine Illusion sind, dass das Auto nur in einem Umfeld nützlich ist, das für und um das Auto herum gebaut ist. Darüber hinaus stellt man fest, dass das Strassenleben – das öffentliche Leben – in einer dichten, kompakten, langsamen, in seiner Grösse menschengerechten Umwelt lebendig pulsiert. Die Strassen von Fes werden für menschliche Interaktion genauso benutzt wie für Fortbewegung: Lebendigkeit sprudelt aus Läden und Werkstätten. Kinder spielen frei auf der Strasse. Freunde, Nachbarn und Bekannte treffen sich zufällig und unterhalten sich eine Weile. Von A nach B zu gelangen wird fast sekundär, wichtiger werden die Aussichten und Erfahrungen auf dem Weg. Einwohner berichten von einem tiefen Gemeinschaftssinn und einem Ortsgefühl, die aus dem hohen Mass an Integration von sozialen, kulturellen, wirtschaftlichen und physischen Aspekten des Lebens in der Medina entspringen. Statt Fes nur als Wertausdruck seines 1200 Jahre alten Erbes zu betrachten, ist es möglich, es im Sinne dessen zu sehen, was unsre modernen Städte aufgrund eines Wachstums der Transportindustrie verloren haben, und was wir durch einen graduellen Wandel unsrer modernen städtischen Form einst wieder geniessen könnten. ■



### Español

**Fes el Bali**, la más antigua capital imperial de Marruecos, y una de las ciudades sin coches más grandes del mundo, es un excelente ejemplo viviente de cómo se puede desarrollar un medio ambiente urbano densamente poblado sin la dependencia de

medios de transporte motorizados o mecanizados. Con un modelo urbano que abarca la capacidad natural de las personas para desplazarse, la accesibilidad por proximidad sustituye la necesidad de los desplazamientos veloces, al tiempo que las calles estrechas, generalmente entre uno y cinco metros de ancho, impiden la posibilidad de dichos desplazamientos rápidos. Así, los desplazamientos diarios en una ciudad de 156.000 habitantes quedan al alcance de los pies, concentrados en el entorno de la vivienda, accesibles en menos tiempo que la media de los destinos alcanzados en coche en las modernas “ciudades del automóvil”. De este modo vemos que la supuesta ventaja de la velocidad es una ilusión y que el coche sólo resulta adecuado en un entorno concebido por y para el automóvil. Es más, nos damos cuenta que la vida en la calle, la vida pública bulle en un medio ambiente a escala humana, compacto, tranquilo y casi libre de vehículos. Las intrincadas calles de Fes se utilizan casi tanto para la vida social como para transitar: la actividad fluye desde las tiendas y centros de trabajo. Los niños juegan libremente en las calles. Amigos, familiares y conocidos se encuentran espontáneamente y se paran a conversar. Los desplazamientos desde A hasta B se convierten en algo secundario frente a las vistas y las experiencias que se dan en el camino. Los residentes tienen un profundo sentido de pertenencia a la comunidad y al lugar, que nace de un alto nivel de integración entre los aspectos sociales, culturales, económicos y físicos de la vida en la medina. En lugar de ver Fes sólo por el valor de su legado de 1200 años, es posible ver Fes en términos de lo que nuestras ciudades modernas han perdido debido al auge del transporte motorizado, y lo que podríamos disfrutar de nuevo con la transformación gradual del modelo urbano de nuestras ciudades. ■

# Indoors vs. Outdoors: A Question of Scale

In the traditional Moroccan pedestrian city, the indoor and outdoor environments are built according to the same scale, the human scale. The outdoor corridors (streets) are no wider than the indoor corridors, the outdoor rooms (squares, though rarely square in shape) no larger than the indoor rooms or interior courtyards. Rather than having a harsh transition from indoor to outdoor, it's often difficult to say for sure which you're in. Sometimes a private courtyard feels like it's indoors but is in fact open to the elements. And a covered street market? A shop with three walls? The line becomes blurred, the distinction meaningless.

In modern cities, motorists, public transport users and cyclists often complain that walking is too slow—not because, as they suggest, the feet they were born with are inherently deficient, but because the modern Car City has destroyed or replaced the urban environment in which the pedestrian thrives. They've erred by questioning their feet rather than the distorted urban form of the modern city. Once we start questioning the usefulness of our own feet, we are seriously confused, incapable of making informed decisions about the environment in which we live.

Consider why, when indoors, even in large buildings such as shopping malls, no one seems to find walking particularly slothlike. Upon entering a building on foot, no one argues that their right to drive or cycle indoors has been infringed upon. It is simply obvious to everyone that the activities which take place inside buildings—talking, shopping, cooking, eating, moving between rooms, especially sleep-walking—are best carried out at or below walking pace.

Only in a seriously oversized indoor environment do people find it useful to increase their speed. (Think of the hypermarkets in which the employees zip around on rollerblades—but even there the advantage would be lost if the customers were similarly equipped.)

So why the disparity in our attitudes toward the indoor versus the outdoor environment? Why do we accept as normal that the indoor environment should be built on a human scale

while the outdoor environment is built on a scale of alienation—sacrificed to speed, filled with roads and vehicles, and left virtually devoid of life?

We, like the fish incapable of questioning the water, find it exceedingly difficult to envision an alternative urban form, in part because we don't necessarily realise that such a thing as urban form exists. It is much easier to reject a particular technology such as the car, easier still to embrace an alternative technology such as the bicycle. Many of us have been promoting alternative transit modes as alternatives in

themselves, without working to create the conditions necessary for the general public to favour them. We've assumed we should occupy ourselves marketing various "options" to the public, as if the car and these "alternatives" exist on a level playing field—as if a level playing field is possible.

There comes a point at which we must decide whether we wish every-day cycling and walking to be alternative lifestyle choices for a minority or the most viable means of transit for the majority. Not until we decide emphatically in favour of the latter we will shift our attention to the transformation of urban form. If and when we succeed, the playing field will not be level, but much like our indoor environment, tipped decisively in favour of the pedestrian.

We can either work to make the city some kind of compromise between motorists and pedestrians, serving neither very well, or we can work to turn everyone into a pedestrian the same way that the Car City turned everyone into a motorist. Experience with tourism suggests that most people would love to spend time in a pedestrian environment; they just don't want to be a pedestrian (or cyclist, or public transport user) in a car-based environment.

In an environment built for and around the car, most people will "choose" to drive. In an environment built for and around the pedestrian, most people will "choose" to walk. It seems the best way to change behaviour is to change environment. ■ - RG

“ **If walking is too slow,  
it is because the  
Car City has destroyed  
or replaced the urban  
environment in which  
the pedestrian  
thrives.** ”

walking to the nearest motor vehicle access at the periphery, driving out to the ring road outside the city walls, circumnavigating the city on the ring road, re-entering the city at the motor vehicle access of your choice, and, inevitably, walking to your final destination. Needless to say, most journeys would be both quicker and cheaper (free) on foot. Ironically, many of them would require less walking than the motorised option.

But it would be a mistake to treat walking here as mere movement from A to B. More important is the experience, interactions, sights, sounds and smells that are part of any journey in the medina.

In fact, that's the very point of the walking city like Fes el Bali—not to access every possible location in the city as quickly as possible, but to provide for one's wants and needs close at hand, so that it is not necessary to travel clear across town.

Of course, all possible locations in Fes el Bali are indeed within reach of one's feet—just in case for some reason you wish to buy a kilo of oranges 30 minutes away, at the very same price and quality as the ones available opposite your home. But while it is not normally necessary to walk across town (a 40-minute walk), if someone wishes to do so it would be absurd to consider it an inefficiency. It should be an option, but not a necessity.

## Freight Transport

While virtually all movement of people within Fes el Bali takes place on foot, donkeys and mules are used for much of the freight transport. The Fes Medina municipality claims there are 280 of them—210 for freight and 70 for rubbish collection. In the narrow streets the mule drivers shout their warning "*balak balak*" and people move aside to allow their passage. It seems to work fairly smoothly, without too much inconvenience to others. The municipality has even designated some streets for one-way mule/donkey traffic, though the rule doesn't apply to pedestrians.

Still, anything that can be carried by donkey can be carried by handcart or on foot. Even the heavy gas canisters used for domestic cooking are carried in all three methods. Handcarts serve for freight transport as well as mobile shops/stands selling everything from fresh fruit to hot soup, snails and sandwiches.

The means of freight transport in Fes el Bali are fully compatible with its low-speed, space-efficient environment. They don't undermine the efficiency of pedestrian transit, the quality of street life or the urban environment in general.

It's not just a question of how goods are transported, but how far—in fact, whether they are transported at all. In Fes, much of the food is grown in the immediate region, while clothing, carpets and crafts are often produced in the same building where they are sold.





*Fes el Bali, near Bab Boujeloud: waiting for the Coca-Cola man to pass.*

## Compactness

It is not necessary to have either public transport or cycling to have a fully functional car-free city (or car-free area). If destinations are concentrated and space-efficiency maximised—resulting in qualities of liveliness, intimacy and community—walking pace becomes the optimum speed. Fes accomplishes this in various ways:

- The space and infrastructure devoted purely to movement between destinations is minimised. In fact it is wasted space, since the purpose of the city is cultural, economic and social interaction—not movement. By having narrow streets and using them for both movement and as destinations in themselves, people are encouraged to choose closer destinations.
- Therefore the use of vehicles (as well as their size and speed) is minimised, in turn minimising the space required for the circulation and parking of vehicles.

many shops and types of shops/services can be fit within walking distance of any given location. Very small shops (for example, 2x3 metres, with a single employee) can stock an enormous range and quantity of products, if the space devoted to movement within the shop is minimised or eliminated (the customer stands outside to order over a counter, and the employee has all products within easy reach, sometimes via a long-handled hook or scoop).

- It is not necessary to have buildings over four stories tall to reach population densities of 500 or even 3,000+ people per hectare. Conversely it is possible, as in modern cities, to have tall residential buildings surrounded by wide streets and car parks, with lower overall population densities. Therefore discussion of optimum density should not be confused with discussion of optimum building height or size.

- A static urban boundary shifts immediately from high density to rural: all urban destinations are concentrated for easy access by foot, and the countryside is close at hand, minimising (among other things) the distance that agricultural products travel to market.

- With small shops and narrow street frontages,

## Pedestrian Cities for the Future

The transport choices we make in daily life are largely pre-determined by our environment—the urban form of the place we live in, and how it affects the relative convenience among these choices. We can see from Fes el-Bali (and Siena, Venice, etc.) that the automobile's perceived convenience—"go when you want, where you want, quickly and efficiently"—is environment-specific; in fact, it's specific to the Car City itself. There is nothing inherently convenient about the car; it wasn't until society redesigned itself to accommodate it that the car became convenient.

Does the car save time? Does the tram? Does the metro? No, the time taken to move across half the city is the same—30 minutes—whether one lives in a Walking City, a Public Transport City, or a Car City. The difference is that the latter two types of cities spread destinations out farther than is manageable by foot, making people dependent on newer, faster transport technologies. Streets widen, straighten and fill with rushing vehicles. Population densities plummet. Public life is diluted, scattering to the last vestiges of public space or retreating indoors. Density is replaced by speed. Interaction is replaced by isolation. Sense of community is replaced by boredom and alienation. Uses are separated according to "Functionalism": we live *here*, we work *there*, we entertain ourselves somewhere else. Life is separated and compartmentalised. More space is devoted purely to movement

*continued on p. 25*



**Today, like so many** times before, you walk into your local grocery store—except, as you quickly notice, everything has changed. In management's rush for progress, the old, "primitive" shopping carts have been "improved"—they now go ten times faster than before: 45 km per hour. At that speed, you are told, they take up ten times more space than the old shopping carts. The aisles have been made five times wider. Instead of being 10,000 square metres (one hectare), the store now covers 75 hectares.

Products are no longer stacked on shelves. They just sit in separate enclosures at ground level, each with its own shopping cart parking area. The distance between products, you notice, is now daunting. But nevermind; you've got speed on your side.

After a few minutes strapped to your hot rod shopping cart, a billboard calls your attention to the canned Spam on sale in Aisle 5. You ease up to the drive-through window, pick up a few tins, and speed off, attentively following signs to Aisle 13, to ease your guilt with some dolphin-friendly toilet paper...After collecting a cart-full of groceries, you proceed to the check-out, which, for your down-to-Earth taste, looks all too much like a highway toll booth.

Sensing the absurdity of the new grocery store even on this day of light shopping cart traffic, you scratch your head in disbelief. "They've gone and rebuilt this store the same way the rest

of the city is built *outdoors!*" you exclaim to yourself. "What in the world possessed them to do *that!*? Is this all part of a bad dream!?"

In many ways this is a bad dream: In the low-speed grocery store you had looked forward to running into friends and neighbours and pausing for a chat in the aisles. You had been able to let your 10 year old wander around a bit, without worrying about her being hospitalised by a speeding shopping cart or accosted by a drug dealer. You had enjoyed having some low-stress time on your feet, and not being angered or significantly delayed by the way *other* people drove *their* shopping carts.

At the same time the surrealist experience gives you a revelation: Whipping out your Palm Pilot, you calculate that, even though you were going 45 km an hour, it took you five minutes longer than normal to collect your groceries! Thinking yourself quite clever, and rightly so on this one occasion, you come up with an explanation for it all, the Stoodenfacher Speed/Density Paradox, which you, being Arthur P. Stoodenfacher, are quick to name after yourself. It actually ends up explaining so many of the problems in the way today's cities are built: *Even though higher speeds theoretically allow us to reach our destinations faster, in reality those destinations spread farther apart as increasingly more space is devoted to movement, and in the end no time is saved—nothing more is accomplished than before.* ■ - RG

# THE POLITICS OF URBAN FORM

JOE DODDS

## Welcome to the Panopticon

The utilitarian and “progressive” Jeremy Bentham once came up with a “perfect” architectural model of power, which could serve just as well as a school, prison, or asylum. He called it the Panopticon.

“The panopticon consists of a large courtyard,” writes Paul Rabinov in his introduction to *The Foucault Reader*, “with a tower in the centre, surrounded by a series of buildings divided into levels and cells. In each cell there are two windows: one brings in light and the other faces the tower, where large observatory windows allow for the surveillance of the cells. The cells become, as Foucault says, small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualised and constantly visible.”

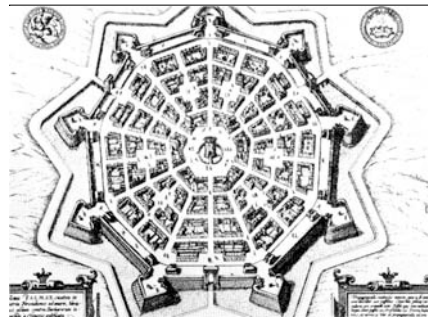
This power is continuous, anonymous, and could be applied to almost any situation. The architectural mechanism could be operated by anyone occupying the correct position in the structure, and potentially anyone could be subjected to it.

“The architectural perfection is such that even if there is no guardian present, the power apparatus still operates effectively. The inmate cannot see whether or not the guardian is in the tower, so he must behave as if surveillance were constant and total, he becomes his own guard.”

Foucault offers Bentham’s horrifying scheme as a model for contemporary hierarchical power relations. It can also work as a model for understanding contemporary urban form. In fact, it can be seen as an ideal for many architectural designs.

In the design of the modern city, and modern architectural power, we can all be perfectly observed, and perfectly isolated from each other. Thus urban form and the possibilities of freedom are intimately connected. If one wanted freedom there would be no chance within the confines of the Panopticon. The modern city may not have reached the diabolical

perfection of Bentham’s dream (or nightmare?) but the possibilities for genuine, bottom-up, face-to-face, decentralised democracy are severely restricted by the urban form presented by the Autopolis, the modern, sprawling, car-dominated city. This article explores this link between urban form and the socio-political life of a city.



Defensive outpost of Venice, 1593.

## The Medieval City

The urban form of the medieval pedestrian city gave rise to particular social structures. In *Mutual Aid*, Peter Kropotkin dates the origin of the European medieval city to the fortification of the village communities, following the wave of invasions in the ninth and tenth centuries by Normans, Arabs and others.

“Thousands of fortified centres were then built over the entire surface of Europe by the energies of the village communities,” writes Kropotkin, “and, once they had built their walls, once a common interest had been created in this new sanctuary, they soon understood that they could henceforward resist the inner enemies, the lords, as well as the invasions of foreigners. A new life of freedom began to develop within the fortified enclosures. The medieval city was born.”

With this new urban form, many of the new cities started to rebel against the power of the feudal lords. Charters were drawn up all over Europe, and the lords forced to

sign, establishing people’s power over the robber-knights. For example, the *coutume* of Bayonne, written in 1273, stated that “The people is anterior to the lords. It is the people, more numerous than all others, who, desirous of peace, has made the lords for bridling and knocking down the powerful ones,” (Giry, *Etablissements de Rouen*). King Robert was made to sign that “I shall rob no oxen nor other animals. I shall seize no merchants, nor take their moneys, nor impose ransom. From Lady Day to the All Saints’ Day I shall seize no horse, nor mare, nor foals.”

The lords clearly felt threatened by this, as can be seen by the nobleman Guilbert de Nogent, who wrote that “the Commune is an oath of mutual aid. A new and detestable word. Through it the serfs are freed from all serfdom.”

The city was organised around a decentralised, compact economy. Different functions were not spatially segregated to far apart locations, and thus all members of a city would be in daily contact with different people who had different roles in the city, rather than each living in their own ghetto. Form such as this allows relative autonomy within each economic section, and in each geographical part of the city a commune could administer its own affairs. Kropotkin comments on how the city wasn’t just a relatively independent part of the state, but can even be seen as a state in itself, although not a centralised state, as “each group had its share of sovereignty.”

The layout of the city was closely intertwined with its social organisation. The city was usually divided into four quarters, according to Kropotkin, “or into five to seven sections radiating from a centre, each quarter or section roughly corresponding to a certain trade or profession which prevailed in it, constituting a quite independent agglomeration.” For example, in Venice, each island was an independent political community with “its own organised trades, its own commerce in salt, its own



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St. Petersburg was replanned in the 19th century to create a parade ground more than half a mile long.

Car Busters April-June 2002

jurisdictions and administration, its own forum; and the nomination of a doge by the city changed nothing in the inner independence of the units." The medieval city was therefore a double federation, with "all house-holders united into small territorial unions—the street, the parish, the section—and of individuals united by oath into guilds according to their professions; the former being a product of the village community origin of the city, while the second is a subsequent growth called to life by new conditions."

These new conditions were the new physical structures of the medieval city, intimately related to its social structures. But how does the urban form of the modern city relate to its social and political life?

## The Autopolis

*"All space is occupied by the enemy. We are living under a permanent curfew. Not just the cops—the geometry. True urbanism will start by causing the occupying forces to disappear from a small number of places. That will be the beginning of what we mean by construction. Gaining our freedom is, in the first place, ripping off a few acres from the face of a domesticated planet."* - Raoul Vaneigem, "Invasion," in *Leaving the 20th Century*.

Compared to the complexity and variety of the mixed-use medieval pedestrian city, the modern city is incredibly simplified, with vast areas of both the city and surrounding countryside being devoted to just one task. Regional and national division of labour is also massively exacerbated, and the centralisation and separation of function has increased the dependency of each area to almost total helplessness.

When cities become the scale and size of the modern Autopolis, the need to administer to the population on a scale of such magnitude is increasingly impossible outside of a central, hierarchical bureau-



cracy. Personal relations are reduced to mass administration.

"The need to transport, feed, employ, educate and somehow entertain millions of densely concentrated people, leads to cultural decline," argues Murray Bookchin. "A mass concept of human relations—totalitarian and regimented—tends to dominate the more individuated concepts of the past. Bureaucratic techniques of social management tend to replace humanistic approaches. All that is spontaneous, creative and individuated is circumscribed by the standardised and the massified. The space of the individual is steadily narrowed by restrictions imposed upon him by faceless, impersonal apparatus."

The same occurs in agriculture. Factory farms are "needed" to feed the modern city. This massively reduces biodiversity, resulting in a tightly regulated and exploited monoculture. Bookchin argues that "Man (sorry for the sexist language!) is undoing the work of organic evolution. By replacing

a highly complex, organic environment with a simplified, inorganic one, man is disassembling the biotic pyramid that supported humanity for countless millennia to a stage which will only be able to support simpler forms of life."

The urban form of the Autopolis may thus fail finally to satisfy even the most basic function of a city, to guarantee the survival of its inhabitants. The dominant social effect of this is the increasingly mass conception of society. This new conception resulted in new urban forms, in particular, a new architecture.

## Le Corbusier and the

### Dawn of Modern Architecture

*"Town planning as a whole is no more than contemporary society's sphere of publicity and propaganda—that is to say the organisation of participation is something in which it is impossible to participate. Keeping traffic moving is*

## Paris and its Boulevards During Second Empire France

The conquest of political power by Napoleon III, coincided with the economic victory of capitalism, and the philosophical victory of "reason." This resulted in the most suitable urban forms for "rational control," military repression, and the worship of the new gods: capital and the victory of the bourgeois over feudalism.

The new rationalisation of urban space resulted, according to David Gregory in *Interventions*, from the "new prominence of money, credit and speculation." Property was increasingly appreciated purely as a financial asset. David Harvey explores this further:

"That Paris was more spatially segregated in 1870 than in 1850 was only to be expected, given the way in which flows of capital were unleashed to the tasks of restructuring the built environment. Much of the worker population was dispersed to the periphery or overcrowded in high-rent locations closer to the centre."

At the same time, the centre of the city was more and more given over to the hard-core commodification of social life. Hausmann destroyed much of Paris to make space for his new streets. Old neighbourhoods and the very fabric of the pedestrian city were ripped apart to sell "a new and more modern conception of community," continues Harvey, "in which the power of money was celebrated as spectacle and displayed on the *grands boulevards*." The boulevards became "play spaces for the bourgeois. The poor

and the working class were being chased from the strategic spaces and even off the boulevards, now viewed as bourgeois interiors. The more space was opened up physically, the more it had to be partitioned and closed off through social practice."

In fact the other, more conscious reason for the construction of the wide boulevards was their military-police function. They enabled "the rapid circulation of troops and the use of artillery against insurrections," which according to the situationist Guy Debord "was at the origin of the urban renewal plan adopted by the Second Empire." He argues that "from any standpoint other than that of police control, Hausmann's Paris is a city built by an idiot." Under Hausmann's planning regime, the city expanded from 3,288 to 7,088 hectares, making it impossible to master on foot, and from 12 to 20 districts, turning former independent communes into satellite suburbs (in the picture Napoleon III hands Hausmann the decree of annexation). He managed to achieve the proto-structure of a car city before cars were even invented!

Interestingly, the urban form required by the car almost exactly coincides with the model needed for military repression. The relationship between urban form, freedom, and the repressive function of the motor car could not be better illustrated.



essentially organising universal isolation, it is the opposite of allowing people to m e e t .” - Kotanyi/Vaneigem, *Unitary Urbanism*, Situationist, 1961.

Peysner describes the twentieth century as “the century of the masses, science, technology, mass locomotion, mass production and consumption, mass communication.” In a mass society, new answers were needed for urgent social problems. The old urban forms would not do. Le Corbusier was one of the most important exponents of modern architecture and city planning. In the 1920s he described the older, pre-mass architecture as being “an old and hostile environment, the intolerable witnesses to a dead spirit and mere junk-shops,” (but I like junk shops!) definitely not fitting with the spirit of the new productive age.

The inauguration of the spirit of mass production was heralded with the trumpets of science and technology, and praised as progressive and even revolutionary. This led to the machine-age aesthetic of urban design and planning, exemplified by the Bauhaus and Le Corbusier. The latter even named one of his standardised houses “Maison Citrohan,” after the car company. A house was a machine for living, a street a factory for producing traffic, the machine the incarnation of the world spirit. This grew into the “International Style,” a universally applicable modern style, reproducible anywhere, transcending all national cultures, and creating a single unified humanity. Except, of course, all who didn’t fit in with this brave new world, who were housed in the newly constructed modern prisons. Representatives of this architecture can be seen all over the world, wherever an ugly, machine-cell, high-rise housing block appears. Where, as Vaneigem in *Unitary Urbanism* writes, “individuals, generally isolated, can watch their own lives being reduced to endless repetitions of the same trivial gesture, on top of which they are forced to consume an equally-repetitive spectacle.”

This machine-age aesthetic, combined with the philosophy of the masses, elevated the modernists into prophets, bringing in the new age of equality and plenty. In practice, it encouraged the cult of the expert, of bureaucrats “with extraordinary powers of command and control in the urban environment,” according to David Harvey. The metaphor of the machine was used throughout philosophical and political discussions. “There is a city mentality which is clearly differentiated from the rural mind,” wrote the Chicago sociologist Louis Wirth (1925). “The city man thinks in mechanistic terms, in rational terms, while the rustic thinks in naturalistic magical terms.” When stated in this way, what is the possibility of

resistance, and to what purpose?

The start of architectural post-modernism can be dated exactly. At 3:32 p.m. on July 15, 1972, the Pruitt-Igoe housing development in St. Louis, Missouri, a prize-winning complex designed for working-class people, was dynamited as uninhabitable. This, proclaimed the architectural critic Charles Jencks, was “the death of the International Style of modernist architecture.” In 1965, Bookchin had made a



similar proclamation, this time on (hopefully!) the death of the Autopolis:

“The modern city and state, the rationalised systems of mass production and assembly-line systems of labour organisation—all have reached their limits. They are regressive not only because they erode the human spirit and drain the community of all its cohesiveness, solidarity and ethico-cultural standards, but because they undermine the viability of the planet and all living things on it.” Thus we have a choice: the death of the Car City or the death of the human and everything else on the planet!” Well, maybe...

### But It Ain’t Necessarily So

Wait: all this is not inevitable. The socio-political form of a city does not directly follow its physical form. Pedestrian cities have of course taken on highly authoritarian forms. However in these cases, the particular form of the pedestrian city tends to correspond to a certain religiously justified ideal of kingship. But even with the hierarchical political forms in some pedestrian cities they still usually had decentralised economic control and a more participatory social life. In comparison, attempts at freer social and political life in modern sprawling car-cities are very difficult if not completely doomed to failure. Hence the failure of many “socialist” revolutions, committed as they were to an outdated industrial model. In contrast, the short-lived anarcho-syndicalist

revolution in large areas of Spain in the ’30s shows how freer, non-hierarchical social structures can emerge, even in industrial cities. However, particular urban forms tend to strongly encourage certain kinds of social and political structures.

The urban form can be compared to the soil that enables particular socio-political plants to grow, although by applying artificial fertiliser, etc., other plants are possible too. You can grow palm trees in Scotland...if you have a greenhouse (we’re back to urban form again!). A good example of this can be seen when comparing the medieval guilds with modern trade unions. Here we can see how the different soil of urban form affected the growth of these labour organisations.

Guilds, brotherhoods, friendships, *druzhestva* and *artels* in Russia, *esnaifs* in Serbia and Turkey, and *amkari* in Georgia developed hugely as a result of the new conditions in the new urban structures of the Middle Ages. They were the embodiment of a decentralised, relatively autonomous, economic organisation, made possible by these forms. The craft guild was a common seller and buyer of its produce and raw materials, and its members were both merchants and manual workers.

Can you imagine modern factories run by workers, who buy and sell their produce directly, without the need to transport it across vast distances? It would be revolution! In contrast, modern trade unions, with no pretensions of running industry, are reduced to serving a few tightly restricted functions, benefiting the bosses more than the workers by “managing” and preventing any truly independent activities of the group they claim to represent.

### To Plan or Not to Plan?

“We want to create environments that are permanently evolving. This need for total creation has always been inseparable from the need to play with architecture, with time and space.” - Gilles Ivain, “Formula for a New City,” in *Leaving the 20th Century*.

The design of the Autopolis almost inevitably requires centralised planning to make sure that all road systems interlock effectively. This prevents a more organic, socially empowered, diffused planning. Now that traffic is getting so bad in our modern or post-modern mega-cities, we increasingly admire the beauty of the medieval pedestrian city, especially the exuberant, organic life they seem to have where they still exist (see article on Fes, p. 14). Why have our planners failed to achieve anything comparable? They are well educated, with years of study, and can utilise the wisdom of decades of planning experiments. Surely the medieval cities must have had super-brilliant urban planners, maybe some

inspired elite of Platonic philosopher-kings? The answer, according to Kropotkin, is a resounding *no*:

"The medieval cities were not organised upon some preconceived plan in obedience to the will of an outside legislator. Each of them was a natural growth in the full sense of the word. Therefore, there are no two cities whose inner organisation and destinies would have been identical." So perhaps, as with government, we can say that the best centralised "planning" is the least planning. Maybe that's why most "utopias" sound terrifying and more than a little fascist. Perhaps we should treat planning more like gardening, but with all inhabitants being gardeners, pruning here, a bit more growth there, than our top-down hierarchical, super-designs.

But what of the buildings? Even in our time, people travelling over Europe are more likely to go to see the magnificent medieval cathedrals than any other urban structure. Is it really possible that their grand design was born from the anarchic, free, creative spirit of the collective energy of the people, with no great architect at the top, directing the masses? In fact the Gothic cathedral becomes the best illustrator of the two-way connection between the social life in medieval towns and their urban form. They were not, according to Kropotkin, the result of "a solitary effort to which thousands of slaves would have contributed the share assigned them by one man's imagination; all the city contributed to it." The cathedral came to symbolise medieval communal life. They were the result of collective experience, "each corporation contributed its part of stone, work, and decorative genius, each guild bestowed its *love* upon the communal monument. Like Greek art, it sprang out of a conception of brotherhood and unity fostered by the city." This spirit can be seen in all "communal works of common utility, such as the canals, terraces, vineyards, and fruit gardens around Florence, or the port and aqueduct of Genoa, or, in fact, any works of the kind which were achieved by almost every city," including Siena and Fes.

## Conclusion and Futures

*"Unitary urbanism acknowledges no frontiers. All forms of separation—between work and leisure, public and private—can finally be dissolved."*  
- Guy Debord, "Traffic," <nothingness.org>.

Urban design is inextricably linked with social and political life. Particular urban forms tend to produce certain social arrangements, and attempts to form certain social arrangements, *when taken to their conclusion*, result in particular kinds of changes in urban form. If



April-June 2002 Car Busters

# TRANSLATION

Übersetzung · Traducción



**Die mittelalterliche** Stadt war um eine dezentralisierte, kompakte Ökonomie herum aufgebaut, verschiedene Funktionen waren nicht räumlich auf weit auseinander liegende Orte verteilt. Die fussgängergerechte Struktur erlaubte den unterschiedlichen Mitgliedern der städtischen Einwohnerschaft täglichen Kontakt statt einer ghettohaften Abgeschlossenheit. Genauso erlaubte sie jedem geographischen Teil der Stadt, jeder Kommune, ihre eigenen Angelegenheiten relativ autonom zu regeln.

## Deutsch

In Venedig zum Beispiel war jede Insel eine unabhängige politische Gemeinde. Verglichen mit der Komplexität und Vielfalt der gemischt gebrauchten, mittelalterlichen Fussgängerstadt ist die moderne Stadt und das Land unglaublich simplifiziert: mit riesigen Gebieten mit nur einer Aufgabe; die Zentralisierung und Trennung von Funktionen hat das Mass der Abhängigkeit einzelner Gebiete bis zur nahezu vollkommenen Hilflosigkeit gesteigert. Wenn Städte die Masstäbe und Grösse der modernen Autopolis erreichen, ist der Bedarf an Administration zunehmend unmöglicherweise anders als durch zentrale, hierarchische Bürokratien zu decken.

Persönliche Beziehungen werden zur Massen-administration reduziert. Jedoch: das sozio-politische Leben einer Stadt folgt nicht direkt seiner physischen Form. Aber selbst, wo in einigen Fussgängerstädten hierarchische *politische* Formen herrschten, hatten sie normalerweise noch immer dezentralisierte *wirtschaftliche* Kontrolle und ein teilnehmenderes soziales Leben. Im Vergleich dazu geraten Versuche, in modernen Autostädten ein freieres Leben zu gestalten, zu sehr mühsamen Unterfangen.

Die städtische Form kann mit Boden verglichen werden, der bestimmten sozio-politischen Pflanzen zu wachsen erlaubt, wobei das Wachstum anderer Pflanzen mit Dünger etc. möglich wird. Es ist möglich, Palmen in Schottland zu pflanzen... wenn man ein Treibhaus hat – womit wir wieder bei der städtischen Form wären: Vollkommen demokratische/freie Städte verlangen dezentralisierte Planungsprozesse, eine sich organisch entwickelnde, fussgängergerechte Struktur, die eine mit der Umwelt verwobene, ausbalancierte Beziehung pflegt. Ausserdem ist die Forderung nach dezentralisierten sozio-ökonomischen Strukturen ein sicher nützlicher und möglicherweise notwendiger Weg, die erwünschte städtische Form zu erreichen. n



## Español

La ciudad medieval se organizaba entorno a una economía compacta y escentralizada. Las diferentes funciones no estaban segregadas espacialmente en localizaciones alejadas. Y su diseño, a escala de los desplazamientos a pie, permitía un contacto diario entre los habitantes de la ciudad, sin que cada uno viviera en su propio gueto. También permitía que cada parte geográfica de la ciudad, cada comuna, administrara sus propios asuntos con relativa autonomía. En Venecia, cada isla constituía una entidad política independiente.

Comparada con la complejidad y la multiplicidad de usos de la ciudad medieval de escala peatonal, la ciudad moderna y su área de influencia resulta increíblemente simple, con vastos espacios dedicados a una única actividad, y el proceso de centralización y segregación de funciones ha reducido drásticamente la autonomía de las distintas áreas. Cuando las ciudades alcanzan el tamaño y la escala de las modernas "autopolis", las necesidades de gestión de la vida social resultan cada vez más difíciles de cubrir fuera de un esquema burocrático, centralizado y jerárquizado. La administración masificada sustituye a las relaciones personales.

¡Pero, un momento! La vida socio-política de una ciudad no viene determinada mecánicamente por su forma física. Lo que ocurre es que incluso con estructuras políticas jerarquizadas, en algunas ciudades de escala peatonal solían tener economías descentralizadas y una vida social más participativa. En comparación, alcanzar una vida más libre en las "ciudades para los coches" resulta muy difícil. El modelo urbano puede compararse al suelo, que permite el cultivo de determinadas variedades de plantas socio-políticas, aunque se necesite recurrir a fertilizantes, etc. Se pueden cultivar palmeras en Escocia... si se tiene un invernadero (¡y otra vez nos topamos con el modelo urbano!).

Las ciudades libres, auténticamente democráticas, requieren procesos de planificación descentralizados, una conformación compacta y un tamaño a escala de los desplazamientos a pie, con unas relaciones equilibradas con su medio ambiente. Así, para conseguir el modelo urbano deseado, trabajar por estructuras socio/económicas descentralizadas puede ser una vía útil y quizás necesaria. n



## New City Spaces in Barcelona and the Move from Fascism to Democracy

The architect and planner Jan Gehl looks at the case of Barcelona in his *New City Spaces*. The centre of the city shows typical "medieval" design. It is compact and very dense "reflecting centuries of population growth within the confines of city walls and ramparts, as in many other old European cities." The new part of the city was built on a grid pattern, and is very dense. Around this, newer, sprawling areas sprang up during the dictatorship. After the fall of Franco in 1979, the new socialist-led government, combined with architects who had refused to compromise during the dictatorship, came up with a plan to adopt a new public space policy. They would create in the urban spaces a democratic architecture that would "give every quarter its own 'living room' and every district its park, where people could meet and talk and children could play." Thus urban form was used consciously to try to create places where the face-to-face meetings could take place that are a requirement of a participatory (not only "formal") democracy. Each square is unique, partly aided by the plan to "move museums into the street," thus all new public spaces "boast a work of art by internationally famous artists." Each quarter now has a public platform for whatever occasion, be it celebration, political gatherings (banned in Francoist times), or play.



people interested in the social freedom movements ignore the importance of urban design then they risk failing in their objectives. Freedom and democracy require opportunities for face-to-face meetings, relatively short distances between people, and the ability of everyone to have some insight into all areas of city life: spatial, economic and political. This is very difficult to achieve in the Car City, but is almost an inherent result of the pedestrian city. This need for freer cities combines with the ecological need for survival, as the urban form of the Autopolis is inherently unsustainable. So where do we go from here? What lessons can be learned from the pedestrian cities of the past that would be practical to apply to a free, sustainable city of the future?

Some have claimed that freedom/anarchism is impossible in cities. Though we might disagree, at least the problems of urbanism have been looked into by the primitivists whose visions maybe represent possible non-urban forms for future communal life. Jon Simcock in his "Anarchism Without Cities?" argues against the primitivist view:

"Some Green anarchists postulate that cities and industrial production imply the growth of a 'hierarchy of specialisation.' But decentralised, appropriately sized communities, simpler methods of production, appropriate technology and the fostering of 'transparency of operation' would hopefully lead more to a 'generalisation' of skills than to specialisation and privilege."

Marx was even more decisive, claiming that freedom is only possible in cities, but the industrial forms that "his" cities took exemplify the bureaucratic, hierarchical control that this article has criticised. In fact, he looked with hope to the disciplining effect of the factories on the workers.

Looking at the mistakes of the medieval free cities/communes, and why they eventually failed, Kropotkin argued that one of the main causes was their isolation from the countryside. This was partly

self-imposed due to the compromise with the lords, gaining their freedom by allowing the lords to have their fiefdoms in the country. This was a fundamental strategic mistake, as cities will always be closely related to their surroundings. They rely on the countryside for access to food, energy, and resources. Both "socialist" and "capitalist" industrialised models manage this connection by universalising to the countryside a particular kind of factory-based urbanism. Future attempts at freedom require harmonisation and blending between the two zones, while recognising and celebrating the diversity of each. In order to reduce the ecological footprint of cities they must be scaled down in size, and a return to complexity allowed. Combined with this, agriculture must be decentralised and re-scaled from huge industrial farms to moderate-sized units.

One possible future model may be Bookchin's "social ecology". Pre-industrial societies relied mainly on muscle power for their energy requirements, but they also relied on a fairly complex and subtle integration of energy patterns and local resources. They therefore would have had an intimate connection with their environment. In contrast, the industrial revolution "overwhelmed and largely destroyed these regional energy patterns, replacing them first by a single energy system (coal) and later by a dual system (coal and petroleum). Regions disappeared as models of integrated energy patterns—indeed the very concept of integration through diversity was obliterated."

Thus the modern city leaves the average citizen ignorant and alienated from the energy and food (s)he consumes, leading to our immense destruction of the environment. Bookchin argues that we should reorganise our cities more in harmony with regional energy patterns, re-establishing the broken link. This would require decentralised, smaller scale, relatively self-sufficient communities "using a combined system of energy provided for by wind, water and solar power. We would be aided by devices more sophis-

ticated than any known in the past. Pieced together as a mosaic, as an organic energy pattern developed from the potentialities of a region, they could amply meet the needs of a decentralised society." As Bookchin notes, this urban form requires a massive decentralisation of society, and a "truly regional" conception of community, as renewable energy sources are found in relatively small packets. He envisions an anarchist community that would "approximate a clearly defined ecosystem," that would be "visibly dependent on its environment," thus gaining a new "respect for the organic interrelationships that sustain it." This, he believes, would in the long-run be "more efficient than the exaggerated national division of labour of today."

Fully democratic cities require decentralised planning processes, and an organically evolving, compact, pedestrian form, in an intricate, well-balanced, and relatively autonomous relationship with the surrounding environment. Also, to reach the desired urban form, advocating decentralised social, economic and political forms is a useful and perhaps necessary way forward.

But how do we move forward in huge sprawling modern cities like London? One answer is to look both to the past as well as to what's already there. Modern alienation may not be as bad as some people think. London, like many other cities, grew up from the combination of many smaller villages. Even now, people sometimes still refer to "village London" as each region, partially representing a former independent village, is still felt in a comparable way today. Many Londoners hardly ever leave their "village," and work and play with others in the local community. Perhaps enhancing this is a good starting block for more far-reaching changes. More work on a regional and local level may enhance community feeling, and lead to a more autonomous regional model. This could once more localise city functions, and help us work towards the goal of a more democratic, pedestrian, free, ecological city. à

## Fes Medina...

continued from p. 19

between destinations, which spread ever-outward in turn. A hierarchy of destinations develops, those deemed inferior sacrificed to access those deemed superior. Destinations are bulldozed in the act of trying to access others. Place is destroyed, replaced with space. The immediate neighbourhood empties of destinations worth visiting. And the charm of the world built for and around the pedestrian disappears, replaced with almost obligatory transport consumption.

The compact Walking City offers a low-tech, inexpensive, proven alternative. It's how cities were organised from the first cities (10,000 to 7,000 years ago) up until the 1850s. The advantages of the Walking City are many: a friendly, vibrant, bustling, interactive, peaceful, pollution-free environment built according to a human scale; a sense of place, of community, of security, of charm, of tradition; ample daily exercise without it becoming an activity in itself; a lack of depression-breeding isolation and



alienation; the feeling of independence that comes with reaching one's destinations under one's own power, regardless of age or physical ability... The advantages of the Car City—and even the Public Transport City—are few. Only when compared to the Car City does the Public Transport City look good. Compared to the Walking City, it looks like needless inefficiency and technological dependence.

While inevitably people will come along and tell you how impossible it is to build a Walking City or an urban car-free village today, you might take interest in the case of Miguel Oliver, an architect whose beach-side housing development (see photos) is now under construction in Puerto de Santa Maria, Spain.

Oliver's high-density, mixed-use development, still under construction, combines medieval Spanish and Moroccan architecture with modern building materials, giving attention to both the indoor and outdoor environment and the relationship between them. Rarely will you find such architectural detail in modern



*Puerto de Santa Maria, Spain: Empty cafe awaits arrival of new residents. Miguel Oliver, architect.*

buildings. Oliver even names one courtyard "Plazoleta de Medina," so the influence is unmistakable.

Whether you personally like Miguel Oliver's development is beside the point. What matters is that it provides proof

that pedestrian cities can be built today, incorporating the benefits of medieval cities. How that fact is applied to different situations and localities will be up to those involved. Palo Alto, California, for example, decided to transform the alleyways of its city centre into a modest network of pedestrian streets complete with Spanish arches and outdoor cafes. Of course nothing yet has

been built or rebuilt on a large enough scale to turn motorists into pedestrians en masse, and that exactly is the challenge ahead, a challenge which will require incredible dedication and staying power.

It's nonetheless important to start the work, to provide at least a few excellent examples—hopefully contagious examples. Some large sites of post-industrial urban wasteland offer immediate potential. Elsewhere the transformation can be made over time, when buildings are torn down and when empty lots are developed. This is how Richard Register, in his book *Eococity Berkeley*, explains an eococity can be built.

A lot more can be done if you have the ability to take space away from car-based infrastructure, which in America can cover up to 50 percent of the urban landscape. You can put up buildings in the middle of an excessively wide street, creating a

narrow lane on each side of the buildings. You can leave spaces for public squares and whatever else. In this way you can redensify inner-city areas that have lost much of what they once had to offer.

Because of the compact design, it doesn't take a large site to build a viable car-free urban village. The medieval old town of Lyon, France, is a few hundred metres wide by less than two kilometres long. Such a site could be found along many an underused industrial waterfront. But we're getting ahead of ourselves...

The first step is to spread the ideas, to get people talking about what kind of environment they want to live in. Groups of people can form, people ready for change and willing to help bring it about, people able to articulate their visions, people determined to overcome the legal and political obstacles thrown in their paths.

Community forums can be held, presentations given, group visioning



processes carried out, articles written—whatever gets the ball rolling. n

Following our December study tour, Joel Crawford has posted his thoughts and photos at <[www.carfree.com/fes](http://www.carfree.com/fes)>. When time allows, more photos and info on Fes and medieval urbanism will be made available on <[www.carbusters.org](http://www.carbusters.org)>.

photos: Randy Ghent

# Studies & Reports

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## You Can't Eat Oil

The UK's food supply system has become almost completely dependent on oil-based road transport, according to a report by Sustain and Elm Farm Research Centre. The report, "Eating Oil: Food Supply in a Changing Climate" highlights the fact that 40 percent of all UK road freight is due to transport of food, and that average road distances travelled by food have increased by 50 percent over the last 20 years.

The madness in the UK's food sector goes far deeper than anyone had guessed, with the same commodity being transported out of and into the country simultaneously. In 1997, for example, 33 million gallons of milk were exported and 71 million imported. This not only is a terrible waste of fossil fuel resources and generation of pollution, but leaves food supply vulnerable to the availability and costs of crude oil. The author of the report, Andy Jones, calls for immediate investment in regional and local food systems.

—Schnews, No. 335

Contact Sustain at 94 White Lion Street, London, N1 9PF, or <[www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)>.

## Change the Metal?

A report heard at the Aluminium Days conference held by the European Aluminium Organisation in Bologna last November recommended an increase in use of aluminium in the manufacture of motor vehicles. This would reduce weight and thus reduce fuel consumption, bringing an overall reduction of their environmental impact.

The report was presented to a warm, aluminium-friendly reception by Amici della Terra (the Italian Friends of the Earth). It predicts that increased use of aluminium could bring the growth in emissions from road transport by 2020 down from 35 percent to 28 percent. However, to make this of any environmental use, end-of-life recycling must increase from its current level (under five percent) to 95 percent efficiency. Only that would overcome the effects of the increase in demand in a material which generates almost twice as much CO<sub>2</sub> as ferrous metals for the same volume. The report also noted the "dissent" caused by links with Alzheimers and bauxite mining, and the industry's appalling pollution record.

—Amici della Terra

<[www.amicidellaterra.com](http://www.amicidellaterra.com)>

## Cars Cause Asthma

An official governmental study carried out in the US has tightened the links between asthma and air pollution. It has long been known that pollutants such as ozone, a major component of urban smog, can exacerbate the disease, but this is the first study that has demonstrated that it is a likely cause of the disease.

The study was carried out at the University of Southern California and backed by both the Californian and US governments. It is likely to be a further spur to creation of air-quality improvement measures worldwide. Asthma is the most serious chronic illness among children in the US, where it affects around nine million. In the UK it now affects one child in seven.

The study followed 3,535 children in different areas and found that those who were very active in smoggy areas were three times as likely to develop asthma as those in areas of clean air. Emissions from motor vehicles comprise 37 percent of ozone precursors (chemicals which degrade to form ozone), and form the largest contributor to ozone in urban areas.

—Independent on Sunday, Feb. 17



## One For the Road

Drinking and driving in the UK declined quite dramatically during the 1980s and '90s. However, a ten percent increase in the year 2000 resulted in a total of 18,000 casualties.

The Institute for Alcohol Studies has been highly critical of the current government for its U-turn in March 2000, on previous promises to reduce the legal limit for driving. The institute believes the climb-down was in response to pressure from the brewing industry.

The legal limit in the UK is 80mg%, compared with 50mg% in most of the rest of Europe and 20mg% in Sweden. Under current prosecution guidelines, this level effectively increases to 90mg%. The Department of Transport estimates that 80 road deaths a year are attributable to blood alcohol levels of between 50–80mg%.

Concern is particularly high about young drivers, as their inexperience is often compounded by their lower tolerance for alcohol. Although any alcohol affects all drivers, for young people, accident rates double after two drinks and increase tenfold after five.

—Ethical Consumer Magazine, No. 75

## Why the Road Enrages

Psychologist Brian Parkinson from Oxford University, England, has been trying to

establish what it is about the road that enrages us so much. His study, published in the British Journal of Psychology, has looked at various factors including the physical isolation of being in a car, the impossibility of effective communication and individual reactions to confrontation.

The study used 113 car-driving volunteers, who all underwent various personality tests. Their attitude to driving was assessed and they were asked to respond to various anger-provoking situations, hypothetical and anecdotal. The conclusion was that anger on the road is fundamentally different from anger expressed elsewhere in daily life.

The study found that anger was more common while driving than in other situations for all kinds of people. Those who normally did not express anger would often become more aggressive through "empathic concern"—becoming angry on behalf of others, feeling that a bad driver put others at risk.

The objects of motorists' anger are usually strangers, creating an unnatural situation for a confrontation. The unknown driver is typically objectified and blamed for the incident.

—The Psychologist, Vol. 15, No. 1

## Ending the Oil Age

Komanoff Energy Associates has published a report detailing how the United States could easily and practically overnight cut its oil use by up to ten percent. Surely other nations could find a source of inspiration in there as well.

The report Ending the Oil Age is available at <[www.rightofway.org](http://www.rightofway.org)>.

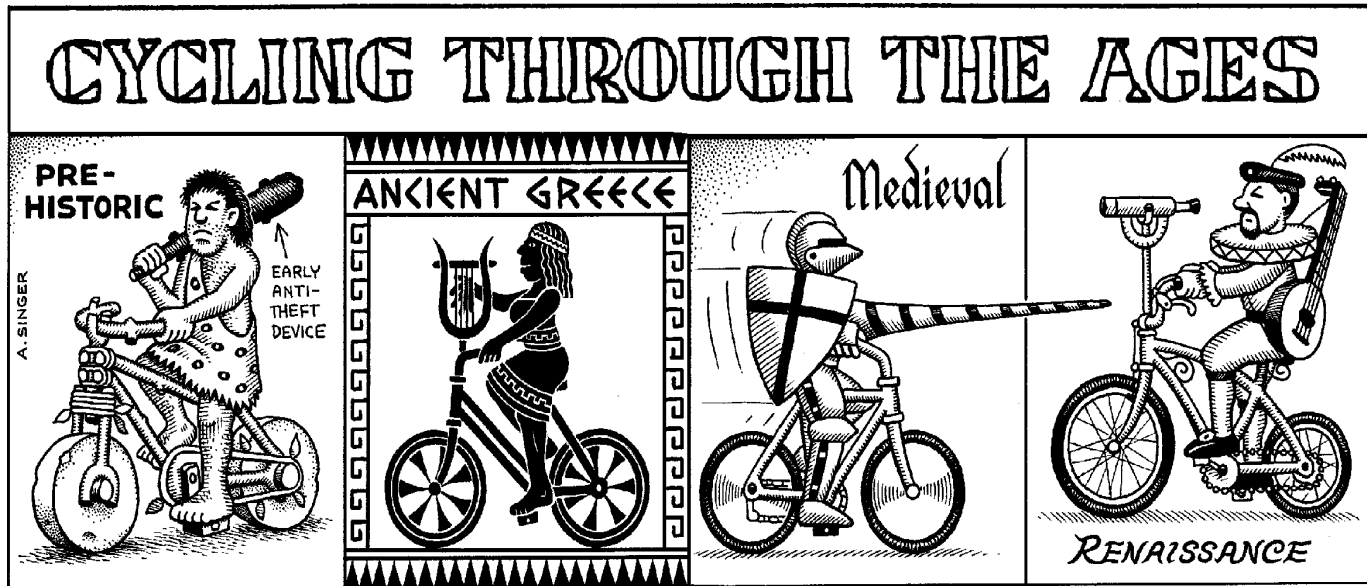
## A Happy Day in London Town

Londoners love car free days. After Car-Free Day last year, an opinion poll was carried out which revealed widespread support for the idea. Out of 777 people questioned in car-free streets in participating areas only 19 didn't believe that the event was a good idea, with 82 percent saying it was "very good."

Respondents were unsure how much the event would actually change future transport behaviour, but 98 percent of people said it should be repeated, and 80 percent that it should happen more often than once a year.

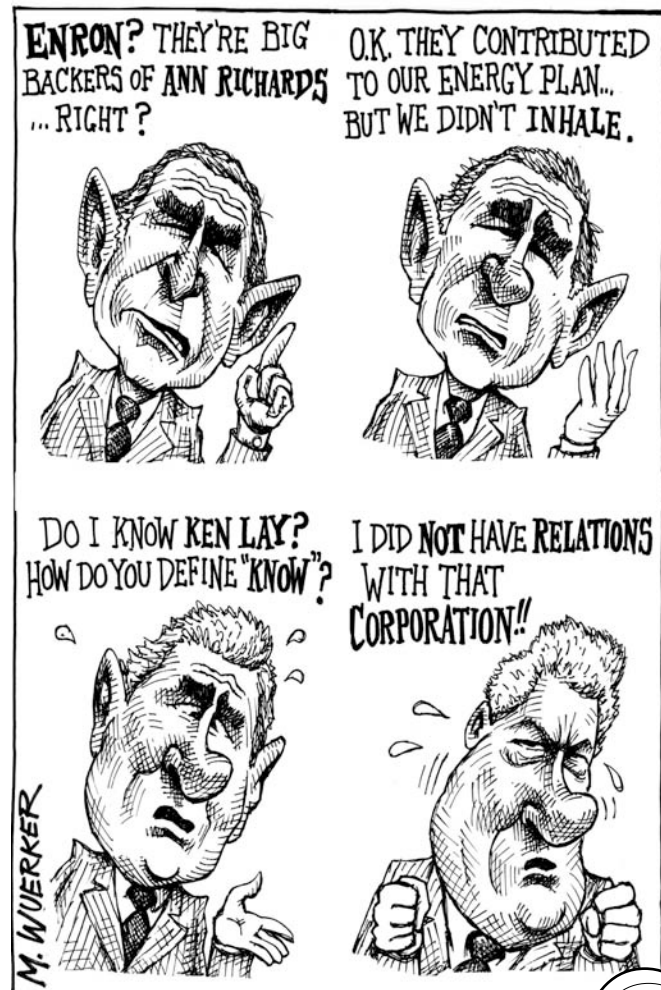
The vast majority of drivers and non-drivers agreed that car use must be limited to reduce traffic and pollution. Almost one in five people said that these streets should be made car-free every day. And more than a tenth of the drivers interviewed agreed with this, possibly hinting at some confusion in the minds of London's motorists.

—Carfree Times, March



**LINT TRAP**

BY MATT W UERKER



# Resources

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Check out our new videos and great back issues bargains accompanied by a price hike on Stop Driving stickers to counterbalance our generosity and cover new print costs.

## Roadkill Bill

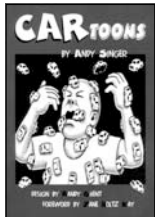
Ken Avidor, 2001, 108 pages  
EUR 10, £6.50, US\$10, AU\$18, CZK 150



It's the comic strip that looks at cars, technology and philosophy from the viewpoint of a frequently squashed rodent. Here the wonderful, provocative, amusing and sometimes gruesome cartoons are collected together for the first time. Avidor gives voice to the suffering soul of humanity that feels bulldozed and paved over by industrial technology run amok. A new release from Car Busters.

## CARTOONS

Andy Singer, 2001, 100 pages, optional CD-ROM contains high-resolution TIF images of all graphics  
Book: EUR 10, £6.50, US\$10, AU\$18, CZK 150  
CD-ROM: EUR 4, £2.50, US\$4, AU\$8, 80 CZK



The long-awaited book compiles Andy Singer's infamous cartoons and makes them available for free nonprofit reuse. Features seven chapter texts and a compilation of hard-hitting quotations. A personal and provocative look at our relationship with the automobile, from Ford's first assembly lines to today's "drive-through" society. CARTOONS doesn't just take a bite out of car culture, it chews it up and spits it out.

## New City Spaces

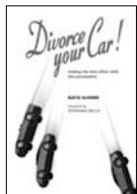
Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, 2001, 263 pages  
hardcover: EUR 50, £30, US\$45, AU\$90, CZK 1,665



This beautiful, thoughtful and informative book details the development of public space and public life worldwide over the past 25 years. Through colour photos, descriptive text and diagrams, it highlights 39 public spaces that have been won back from traffic. It also focuses on nine public space strategies that have been successful in working towards a unified vision of public space.

## Divorce Your Car

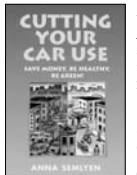
Ending the Love Affair With the Automobile  
Katie Alvord, 2000, 320 pages  
EUR 20, £12, US\$18, AU\$32, or CZK 680



Divorce Your Car! speaks to individuals, encouraging readers to change their own driving behaviour without waiting for broader social change. From commuters crazed by congestion and "soccer moms" sick of chauffeuring, to environmentalists looking for auto alternatives, *Divorce Your Car!* provides all the reasons not to drive and the many car-free alternatives.

## Cutting Your Car Use

Save Money, Be Healthy, Be Green!  
Anna Semlyen, 2000, 160 pages  
EUR 8.25, £5, US\$7.50, AU\$13, or CZK 280



Britain's first personal traffic reduction guide. Packed with constructive, easy-to-follow, practical advice. For anyone who wants to cut their car use, or give up the car completely.

## CarFree Cities

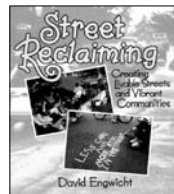
J.H. Crawford, 2000, 324 pages, hardcover  
EUR 33, £20, US\$30, AU\$55, or CZK 1,100



An unapologetic argument for car-free cities combined with a detailed and well thought out plan, the book outlines a city structure carefully designed to minimise environmental impact and maximise quality of life worldwide. It gives practical suggestions for gradually implementing Crawford's car-free reference design in existing cities, and for creating new ones.

## Street Reclaiming

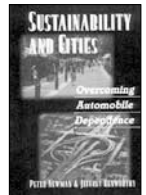
Creating Livable Streets and Vibrant Communities  
David Engwicht, 1999, 207 pages  
EUR 19, £11, US\$17, AU\$28, or CZK 600



*Street Reclaiming* not only celebrates the potential of our streets to become vibrant centres of culture and community once again—but also shows you how you can make it happen, whether you're a city official or a resident. A quantum leap beyond traffic calming, the book contains a host of ideas and tools for reclaiming your streets.

## Sustainability and Cities

Overcoming Automobile Dependence  
Peter Newman and Jeff Kenworthy, 1999, 350 pages  
EUR 44, £27, US\$40, AU\$70, or CZK 1500



The authors make the case that the essential character of a city's land use results from how it manages transport, and that only by reducing our car dependence will we be able to successfully accommodate all elements of the sustainability agenda. Includes an updated survey of global cities that examines a range of sustainability factors and indicators, and, using a series of case studies, demonstrate how cities around the world are overcoming automobile dependence.

## Public Spaces - Public Life

Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, 1999, 96 pages  
EUR 26.50, £16, US\$24, AU\$42 or CZK 900



This beautiful book filled with colour photographs and maps describes the remarkable qualitative human-scale improvements that have taken place in Copenhagen over the past 34 years, and how they have been accomplished. It presents a method of assessing urban quality and gives a thorough insight into how people use urban public spaces.

## Alice in Underland

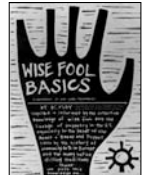
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1999  
EUR 11, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 350



"A curious mixture of nonsense, social satire and surrealist fairy tale, which takes the classical Alice through the dreary landscape of suburban America." Entertaining and insightful.

## Wise Fool Basics

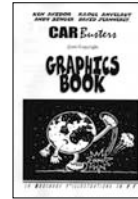
K. Ruby, Wise Fool, 1999, 96 pages  
EUR12, £7, US\$11, AU\$18 or CZK400



Giant puppet building, street theatre tips, still-making... A fantastic book full of useful information and inspiration for making direct action imaginative, artistic and creative. Loads of diagrams and photos.

## Car Busters Graphics Book

Car Busters, 1999, 44 pages  
EUR 5.50, £3.5, US\$5, AU\$10, CZK 180



Our *Graphics Book* brings together some of the best graphics on file at Car Busters. Includes info on how to produce attractive fliers, posters, etc. The graphics can be reproduced freely.

## Direkte Aktionen oder Die kleine Blockadefibel

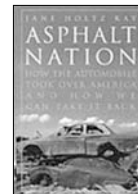
Anonymous, 1999, 52 pages, EUR 3.50 or equivalent

Das Beste aus dem berühmt-berüchtigten Buch Road Raging: Top Tips for Wrecking Road Building. Hilfreiches für Protest-camps, Strassen-parties, Kranblockaden, Car Walking, Subvertising, Informationen zu Rechtlichem und Gruppenprozessen.

## Asphalt Nation

How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back  
Jane Holtz Kay, 1998, 440 pages

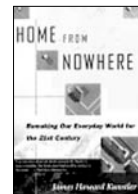
EUR 20, £12, US\$18, AU\$32, or CZK 680



*Asphalt Nation* is a powerful examination of how the car has ravaged America's cities and landscape over the past 100 years, together with a compelling strategy for reversing our dependency. Demonstrating that there are economic, political, architectural, and personal solutions to the problem, Holtz Kay shows that radical change is entirely possible.

## Home from Nowhere

Remaking Our Everyday World for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
James Howard Kunstler, 1998, 320 pages  
EUR 15.50, £9, US\$14, AU\$24, or CZK 525



Kunstler offers a way back from the "tragic sprawlscape of cartoon architecture, junked cities, and ravaged countryside" that he described in *The Geography of Nowhere*. A powerful writer, Kunstler calls for the restoration of traditional architecture, sensible urban design principles, and the development of public spaces that meet people's need to interact with one another.

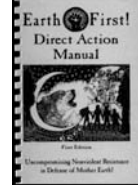
## The Age of the Bicycle: A Novel

Miriam Webster, 1998, 270 pages  
EUR 6.60, £4, US\$6, AU\$10, or CZK 150

A quirky novel of love, magic, river gods and the mysterious end of the Automobile Age. Combining fairytale possibilities with sharp social satire to produce a novel to entertain children and adults alike.

## Direct Action Manual

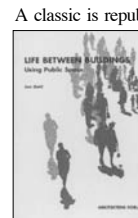
Earth First!, 1998, 152 pages  
EUR 6.60, £4, US\$6, AU\$10, or CZK 150



This is an almost comprehensive guide to direct action tactics developed around the world. Lots of useful diagrams and illustrations.

## Life Between Buildings

Jan Gehl, 1996, 192 pages, third English edition  
EUR 20, £12, US\$18, AU\$32, or CZK 680



A classic is republished and revised. This book is the best source for understanding how people use urban public spaces. Published in many languages since 1971, it is a standard textbook in architecture and planning schools, and continues to be the undisputed introduction to the interplay between public space design and social life.







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[includes a one-year magazine subscription, a copy of "CARtoons" and a copy of "Roadkill Bill" by Ken Avidor]

o **Saviour** – US\$100/EUR100/£60\*  
[includes a two-year magazine subscription, a copy of "CARtoons" and a copy of "End of the Road" by Wolfgang Zuckermann]

o US\$15/EUR15\* – Subscription Only: 1 Year

o US\$26/EUR26\* – Subscription Only: 2 Yrs

o \_\_\_\_\_ – Donator (Economic Liberty Rate)

o I'm enclosing \_\_\_\_\_ for the following books or resources: \_\_\_\_\_

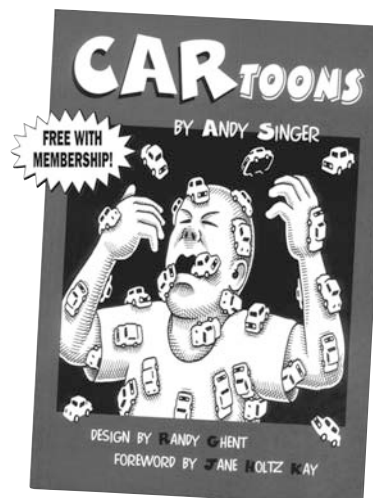
o I want to receive your monthly e-mail bulletin, so here's my e-mail address (written clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\* or the equivalent in AUD or GBP. Car Busters accepts U.S., Euro, British and Australian cheques. Credit card payments can be made on the Car Busters web site. Other payment options listed on p. 29.



ä Car Busters, Krátká 26, 100 00 Praha 10, Czech Republic – e-mail: carbusters@ecn.cz  
web site: www.carbusters.org

# Announcements

Annonces · Anzeigen · Anuncios



*Have something to announce? Send it in by the next deadline. Believe it or not, it will cost you nothing.*

## World Car-Free Days 2002

From September 13-27 people around the world will join together for World Car-Free Days 2002—two weeks of actions and events calling for an end to the hundred-year reign of the automobile.

The schedule so far: September 13 is the anniversary of North America's first car fatality (Henry Bliss, New York City, 1899), September 22 the European Car-Free Day, September 23 the day of Hitler's groundbreaking of the first Autobahn in 1933, September 25/27 is the ten-year anniversary of the first Critical Mass bicycle ride (San Francisco, 1992). It's up to you to fill in the days in between.

A continuing stream of information and resources is available on our website: an on-line discussion about what to do on WCFDs, list of events to take place (please register if you are planning one), graphics, and a lot more.

On the web: <http://www.carbusters.org/carfreeday>

## BaltiCCycle

The Baltic cycling associations invite you to participate in the "BaltiCCycle," a July bicycle tour through Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Kaliningrad.

The route follows the rough Estonian coast to Riga and from there through the hills of western Latvia, in Lithuania through the land of rivers and castles or through the untouched nature of the Russian district of Kaliningrad. We all unite in the beginning of August at the seaport of Klaipeda for the Baltic Sea Festival.

You can ride on your own bike or on a rented one, with your friends, in a group or alone. Distances per day are 40-70 km. Fees start at EUR30 per week, and there are various discounts.

More info: Tel: +370-99-56009, Fax: +370-6-412483, [balticcycle@bicycle.lt](mailto:balticcycle@bicycle.lt), <http://www.bicycle.lt/>, P. O. Box 190, LT5800 Klaipeda, Lithuania.

## Bikesummer

This August, a whole month full of bicycle-related activities and events—Bikesummer 2002—will take place in Portland, Oregon.

The Bikesummer 2002 Steering Committee promotes and develops a calendar of events. Local and non-local groups and individuals plan events and activities—

everything from Bicycle Ballet to safety workshops.

Contact: BikeSummer Portland, P.O. Box 786, Portland OR 97207, USA [www.bikesummer.org](http://www.bikesummer.org).

## UK Bike Week

June 15-23, a week of cycling related events will take place in UK. The target is to organise 1,500 local events and attract 200,000 participants. New event organisers will be warmly welcomed!

Contact: [nick@harvey.co.uk](mailto:nick@harvey.co.uk), <http://www.bikeweek.org.uk/>

## Towards Car-Free Cities III

Car Busters is starting to organise the third Towards Car-Free Cities conference, to be hopefully held in March 2003 in Prague.

We're looking for partner organisations and individuals to join the organisation team. After successful rounds in Lyon and Timisoara, we're going to take Prague by storm. There is still plenty of time to contribute to the programme.

Just contact us to get involved: Krátká 26, 10000 Praha 10, Czech Republic, [carbusters@ecn.cz](mailto:carbusters@ecn.cz)

## CNU X

The Tenth Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU X) will take place June 13-16, Miami Beach, Florida. The tentative theme for the 2002 conference is "From Suburbs to Town."

The principles of new urbanism include coherent regional planning, walkable neighborhoods, and attractive, accommodating civic spaces.

Contact: <http://www.cnu.org/index.cfm>

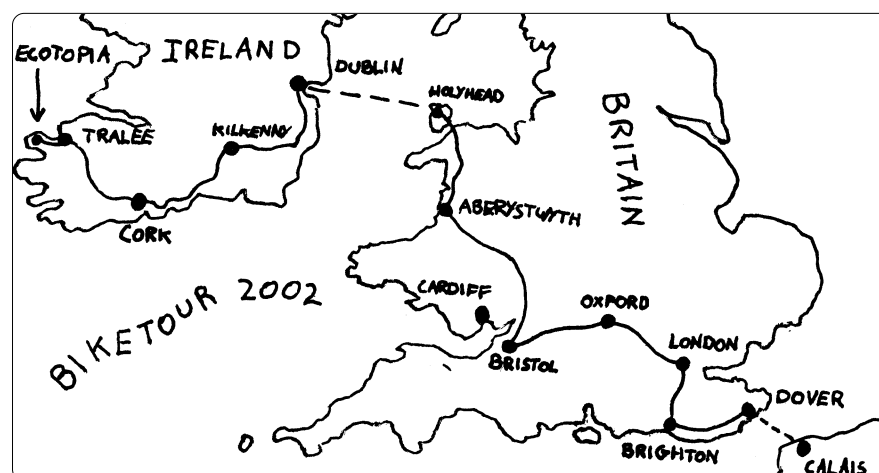
## German Car-Free Day(s)

On Sunday, June 16, the 21st Car-Free Day will take place in Germany. The goal of the action is to attract people to non-motorised and public transport and to appeal to politicians to support such modes of transport in priority to cars.

June 18 is declared University Car-Free Day, on which universities are asked to encourage their employees and students to commute car-free.

The organising association offers A3 colour posters and A4 folded leaflets in German at the production cost.

Contact: [oeke@refrat.hu-berlin.de](mailto:oeke@refrat.hu-berlin.de), <http://www.mobilohneauto.de/>



## International "Celtic Safari" Bike Tour to Ecotopia

The Ecotopia Bike Tour is an annual event on an ecological/social-justice theme, particularly focussed on sustainable transport. It crosses Europe on a different route each summer, culminating at the EYFA Ecotopia gathering which takes place in a different European country.

In 2002, Ecotopia will take place in Ireland August 10-24, and the biketour will arrive around August 15 after crossing England and Wales.

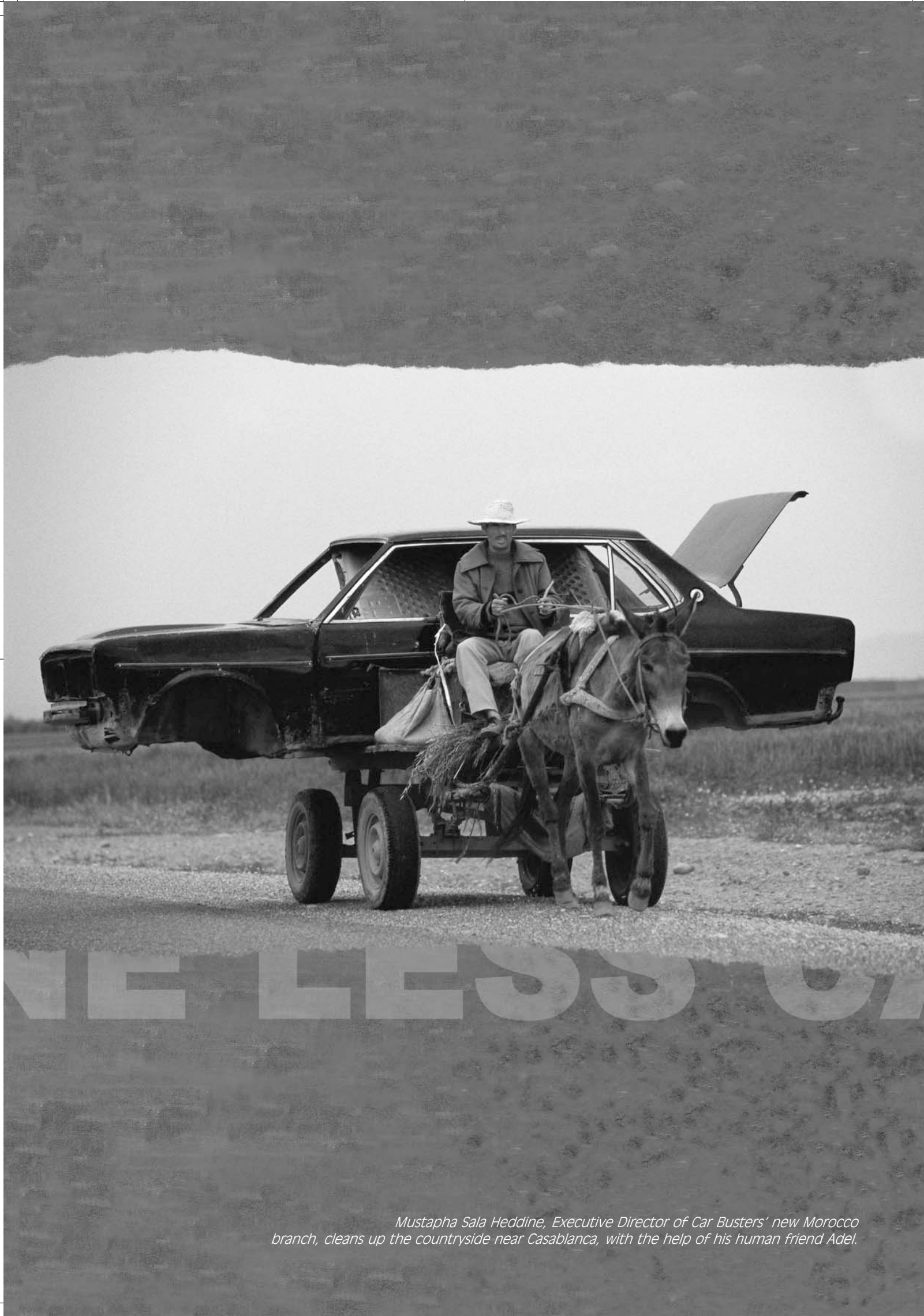
The ride begins on July 10 in Dover. It is then likely to pass through Brighton, London, Oxford and possibly Bristol. The route will then cross Wales to Holyhead where participants will catch a ferry to Dublin to continue their journey.

En route, "Biketopia" will link with local

groups and present its vision of sustainability. Participants will have opportunities to share experiences from their cultures and from ecological projects with which they are involved.

Biketour 2002 invites activists and cyclists to get involved, take part or help organise. Biketour would particularly appreciate any offers of funding, food, or camping space along the route. Biketour would also be grateful for any advice or ideas for cycle-related campaign actions which people might be able to help organise in their towns along the route.

Contact: Biketour 2002, 16b Cherwell Street, Oxford, OX4, UK, tel: +(44)-01865-427-879, [btour2002@yahoo.com](mailto:btour2002@yahoo.com), <http://www.thebiketour.net/>



*Mustapha Sala Heddine, Executive Director of Car Busters' new Morocco branch, cleans up the countryside near Casablanca, with the help of his human friend Adel.*

